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Tales of the EX-TANKS

CLARENCE LOUIS CULLEN

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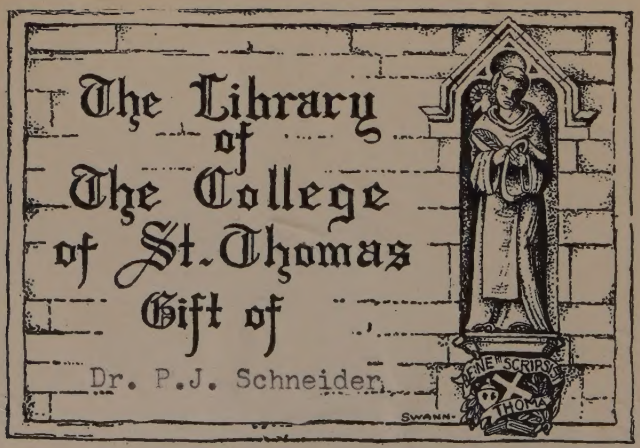

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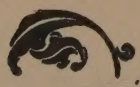
TALES OF THE EX-TANKS.

TALES *of* THE EX-TANKS

A Book of Hard-Luck Stories

By CLARENCE LOUIS CULLEN

"You can't keep a squirrel on the ground"



GROSSET & DUNLAP
ELEVEN EAST SIXTEENTH STREET
NEW YORK

These sketches originally appeared in the columns of THE NEW YORK SUN, and the author and publishers wish to acknowledge the courtesy of the Editor in permitting their publication in book form.

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Introductory Note

FREQUENT enquiries have been made by readers of these tales as to the exact address—street and number—of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates. Those of the enquirers unto whom the information was vouchsafed subsequently complained that, when they diligently hunted up the addresses given, they found themselves regarding (1) the bleak emptiness of vacant lots, (2) the uninviting exteriors of third-rate dressmaking establishments, or (3) the bland, steamy outworks of Chinese laundries. The first class of searchers for the club's plant therefore rushed to the conclusion —which they expressed in letters—that the tales were as vacant of truth as the vacant lots were of club edifices. Those whose investigations led them to the dressmaking establishments voiced the belief that the tales were made out of whole cloth. Those whose search for the club took them to the

Chinese laundries, hesitated not to deliver themselves of the opinion that the tales were "pipe dreams," as their celestial source must plainly indicate.

Far be it from the reporter of the deliberations of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates to endeavor to cast the mantle of mystery over the club's location. Is it not within the range of belief that the Ex-Tanks themselves do not know the club's address—that they are conveyed thereto blindfolded and in closed carriages, and removed in precisely the same manner upon the terminations of the club's sessions—and that, in consequence, the Ex-Tanks remain as ignorant of the exact location of the club of which they are members as—in their degenerate days—they doubtless often were as to the exact locations of their own homes?

In any event, what does the address signify? The membership quota of the club has been filled to the limit for a long time past, so that scores of clamorous Ex-Tanks, eager for admission, have clamored in vain—for few initiated Ex-Tanks die,

and none resign. They are too appreciative of a good thing to do either the one or the other.

Certain mischievous friends of the writer of these tales solemnly profess their belief that all of the stories are autobiographical. It will be obvious to the reader that, however large an area a somewhat restless newspaper man may have covered before attaining his thirtieth year, and varied as such an individual's experience may have been, he could not possibly be all of the Ex-Tanks rolled into one. The writer hopes the reader will view the matter in this light, at any rate.

CLARENCE LOUIS CULLEN.

New York, July 15, 1900.

TALES OF THE EX-TANKS

A BOOK OF HARD-LUCK STORIES

TALE THE FIRST

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 3 Sheweth that the Hock-Shop Violin may be Ye Real Thing

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WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 3 SHEWETH THAT THE HOCK-SHOP VIOLIN MAY BE YE REAL THING

"Now, St. Louis was my hoodoo town," said Ex-Tank No. 3, unconsciously disobeying one of the club rules by making rings on the table with the bottom of his glass of vichy and milk. "During the progress of six tumultuous years I never hit St. Louis that it didn't get me down and out before I so much as had a chance to take a look at Shaw's Gardens. It didn't make any difference whether I struck St. Louis wearing spurs, sombrero bells and giglamps, coming from the West, or whether I got into it with a silker, studs and patent leathers, travelling from the East, that insidious town always took a-hold of me during those six pipe-dreamed years and counted me among the also-rans before I had a show to find out where I was at. It fairly makes me ache to think of the number of times I walked under the steely, glittering stars that hang over St. Louis, wondering how I could get just one hooter to make me feel that life would be

worth living five or ten minutes longer. And I want to go on record as saying that, hard as the proposition was on each and all of these occasions, I always got the hooter. But, as I say, I had to walk long distances under stars that just winked me the laugh before I thought the thing out, and I generally had to take my vest to a second-hand store at the finish, at that.

"But, fellow Ex-Tanks, there never was a hoodoo yet that couldn't be broken. I smashed that hoodoo the last time I covered St. Louis. The last time I covered St. Louis I got out of it on the varnished cars, and not on a side-door Pullman, and I had a front and all colors of it in my clothes. This thing of getting out of St. Louis as a deck-hand on a freight boat bound for Memphis—but, as I say, St. Louis doesn't owe me anything now. A Stradivarius violin is a great thing, anyhow."

Then No. 3 gazed into his glass of vichy and milk dreamily. Ex-Tanks Nos. 6 and 9 called him to order at once.

"What the dickens," they both inquired together, "has getting out of St. Louis with two dollars and a railroad ticket got to do with a Strad fiddle?"

The Chief Ex-Tank perceived the reasonable-

ness of this question and requested No. 3 to refrain from drifting.

"Well," continued No. 3, "this Stradivarius fiddle was the thing that enabled me to rip out the works of that St. Louis hoodoo and look 'em in the face. If it hadn't been for that fiddle—but it wasn't a fiddle; it was a violin. There's just as much difference between a fiddle and a violin as there is between Hickory Jim and George Dewey, and ——"

At this point No. 3 was again called to order by several Ex-Tanks for roping in extraneous matter in connection with a recital of an alleged win-out, as they put it.

"I wouldn't ha' gone to St. Louis at all that last time," proceeded No. 3, after this round-up, "if I hadn't been pushed over there by accident. I made a finish of a Chicago spiel no further away than in Dayton, O. I don't remember getting to Dayton, but I remember getting away all right. I got a shave and a shine and a haircut and a fifteen-cent collar in Dayton when I came to, and hit up some people there for a job. I thought they might give me something to do in the sweep-out line, just to enable me to buy a ticket for some place or other after a couple of weeks' work; but they didn't. Derned if they didn't take hold of

me at the right end, some way or another—probably because I shot a good line of talk into 'em—and undertake to teach me the business and how to sell their goods. Never got handled so white in my life as I was handled in Dayton by those people. After I'd hung around the works there for a month or so they told me to stand by to go on the road to sell goods. I stood by with a whole lot of a broad grin, I want to say, for the fellows who were then selling their goods on the road were making money by hatfuls. When they finally told me, however, that my first trip was to be to St. Louis I was ready to do a lay-down. I did better than that, though. I up and told the man who was handling me all about it—what a hoodoo St. Louis had always been to me, and that if he sent me to St. Louis to sell goods I'd probably draw on him for a thousand dollars before I'd been there twenty-four hours, and then he wouldn't hear any more of me or my samples.

"'That's all right,' said he. 'St. Louis is the only vacant territory I've got just now, and that's where you're going—to-night. Pack up.'

"And so I went to St. Louis to sell goods. How'd I make out? Oh, only about $50 to $100 a day, clean, that's all. For the first week I was there I sold so many goods that I was afraid the

Dayton folks couldn't make 'em fast enough to deliver, and I wired the firm about it. They wired me back to sell a million if I could, and I started in to do it. The hoodoo seemed to be broken. Never had such slathers of luck in my life. My four dollar a day room at the Laclede wasn't big enough for me after three days, and so I got a suite, so I could pay more money for my accommodations. Then I fell to selling goods only in the morning, because I felt compunction about taking all the money in St. Louis for myself and my firm, and in the afternoons I went out to the Fair Grounds and looked at 'em run. Couldn't lose at that game, either. Picked five out of six on the card, every day for six days running, and then says I to myself, 'This hoodoo business is all a hasheesh fantasy. If I felt any better I couldn't stand it. If I had any more luck it 'ud kill me. I'll just take one or two, to spread a few dollars around a town that I'm taking too much money out of.' Which I did. I just got nibbling at the stuff—same old way—and doing business at the same time. I went right on selling goods and nibbling at the red-eye, and making the coin to give away. I couldn't see any finish to it.

"One afternoon, after I'd been in St. Louis for nearly a month, I happened to pass by a pawnshop

that looked familiar to me. The annual sale of unredeemed pledges was going on at the time, and that's how I happened to notice the joint. I got to thinking about it and I remembered that two years before, when I was rassling with the St. Louis hoodoo and getting the worst of the falls, I had put in two good sparkers there—a ring and a pin. I wondered if I had any show to get them at this sale, and so I went in to find out about it, having all colors of stuff in my clothes to redeem them if they were still there. They were still there. I looked them over and I wanted them. The pawnshop people saw that I wanted them, and so they told me I had no more claim on them, not having paid the interest, than the general public—that they were going to put the ring and the pin up to be auctioned off that same afternoon. So I stayed to watch the bidding on them. I had a few of the St. Louis brand of drinks under my vest at the time, and felt pretty good. I had to wait for the auctioneer duck to come to my ring and pin, and I watched the other stuff being put up without much interest until the fellow down below handed up an old leather violin case. That made me sort o' woozy. I recalled that when I was a kid my father had tried for several years to drum some violin music into me—using a fence picket for the

purpose, generally, on account of my disinclination to do any practicing—and I thought to myself that I'd just pull down that old violin for fun. I asked the chap on the block to let me look at it, and I inspected it critically, not knowing any more, really, about a violin than I did about active temperance work.

"This was a queer-looking old outfit, though. It was a bruised-looking old fiddle, without any bridge or strings on it. There was nothing fancy about it—no gingerbready mother-of-pearl inlaid work or anything of that kind—but there was a head on the end of the neck that was carved into what looked to me like a mask of tragedy or something like that. The case was of untanned leather, with old-fashioned brass hinges, and there were three funny-looking old bows, with little or no hair on 'em, in the box. I decided to get the old thing, anyhow, and string it up and see if I could remember how to play 'Rory O'More,' the only tune I ever could learn on the fiddle when I was a kid. I passed it up to the auctioneer, nobody else caring to look at it, and he started it going at a dollar. I bid two and got the whole outfit at that figure. Then I waited until they put up my ring and pin and got them at the figure I had paid for them originally. Then I picked up my old violin

case and went to my suite—how's that, my suite? —at the Laclede. I put the fiddle case under the bed, went out and got a few more high balls, and forgot all about the thing for a week. By the time that week had passed I wasn't selling so many goods. I was too busy to pay much attention to the goods. I was trying to see if I couldn't find out what had become of that St. Louis hoodoo. I wanted to give the hoodoo every chance in the world to show up, and I did. I thought of the old fiddle one afternoon, however, and went into a music store and bought a set of strings for it and a bridge and bow. I took the old fid out when I got to the hotel and strung her up. I remembered how to do that, anyhow. But, say, I found when I tried to saw on it that I couldn't play a note. I remembered how 'Rory O'More' went, all right, but I was the hammiest thing that ever happened when it came to doing it with a bow. I noticed when I picked the strings of that old violin, though, that it sounded pretty good—kind o' deep and rich and contraltoish, with a lot of volume and resonance and that kind o' thing.

"'Well,' says I, when I put it back into its case and shoved it under the bed, 'the fid's worth two dollars, anyhow, and the first Dutchman I meet that'll play "The Irish Washer-

woman" for me on it will get the old thing for nothing.'

"Then I forgot all about it all over again. By this time I was nibbling pretty hard at the old stuff, and not thinking much about business. I had seven or eight hundred ready money and business wasn't bothering me. Then came the night that I went up against the green stuff that the boy behind the bar frappés for you, and it was all off. The hoodoo got me. I didn't know anything for a week, and when I got out of the trance I found a large and turbulent stack of telegrams from my Dayton people. Most of 'em were asking me for explanations as to where I was at. The last one read like this:

"'You are fired.'

"'The thunder you say,' says I, and I went out and tanked up again for another week or so. Then I got a lucid interval long enough to pay up the bill for that Laclede suite and to take a two dollar a day room on the European plan, and by that time I had only thirty five dollars left out of the wad—and no job. The hoodoo was getting in its work by this time all right, and I could see the deck-hand finish on the freighter as far down as Memphis again.

"Well, the same three-balls outfit got the ring

and pin a week or so later, and after that the thing's a good deal of a dizzy blank until I came to in a little six by eight room in a theatrical boarding-house with nothing much to speak of except forty cents in change and two or three beer tickets, and the whole wardrobe in. Didn't recall putting the things in, but they weren't anywhere to be seen, and I found the tickets in my pockets when I did the usual digging around act customary under such circumstances. I went out and blew in the forty cents and beer tickets, and then I came back to the room to see if I couldn't find something else whereupon to raise the price. The end of the old fiddle case stuck out from beneath the bunk, and I pulled it out. I thought I might be able to get fifty cents or a dollar on it, and I reflected what a gorgeous inspiration it had been on my part that afternoon to buy it in. I took it out of the case to see if the strings were all right still, and picked on it some. Then I drew the bow across the strings to see if the old thing was in tune, so that if the pawnbroker guy tried it he'd find it all right. I was hauling the bow across the G and D strings when I heard a rap on my door. 'Come in,' says I, and the queerest little chap you ever saw—all hair and eyes—walked in.

"'I hairt ze veeolin,' he said, 'unt I ze lip-

perty took—it zound most vell. May I him see ?'

"I handed it over to him, and he looked it over, and then he looked me over. Then he felt all over the fiddle, and rapped on the back of it, and examined the inside of it, and fondled that mask of tragedy headpiece, and finally picked the strings. Then he looked me over some more.

"'Vair you get zis ?' he asked me, and derned if the hairy-looking little old chap didn't examine me with suspicion.

"'At a hock shop, for a couple o' dollars,' said I. 'Why ?'

"He went on picking the strings again, and then he gave me such a series of suspicious stares out of his big fiery eyes that he sort o' made me hot.

"'Is there anything ailing you, Jim ?' I asked him.

"He didn't make any reply, but he put that old fiddle under his chin, made a sweep with the bow, gave a crash on the strings from the G up to the E and all on the bridge in a chord, and—say, it gets me around the neck to talk about that duck's music, honest it does. I never heard anything like it. Why, it was simply devilish ! What he couldn't do to that old thing—well, he gave a lot of those crashing chords all over the violin, and then he be-

gan 'way down on the bottom of the G string and fooled around there with those stubby fingers of his, and you could shut your eyes and think there was a woman in the room with a contralto voice, and a soul in it, at that. Then he gradually worked his way up to the top of the E string and burst into a lot of low whimpering up there, and, after keeping that up a while, down he went to the G again with a mutter like a little cascade, and—well, I walked over to the dirty window of my room, looked out into the alley, and felt sorry for making such a hash of my life, and I'm not such a soft slob, either. There's not a fellow in this room that that music wouldn't have made to feel like thirty cents, and I know it. He must have played away for fifteen or twenty minutes and when he did stop I turned around. I knew that he couldn't have made that music on an ordinary fiddle, and, badly as I was in need of the price, I had already reconsidered the idea of taking it to a three-ball shack and putting it in for a half-dollar or so.

"'You play that thing pretty well, Jim,' said I.

"He pulled out a big red bandanna handkerchief and wiped his eyes. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"'Unt who could nod?' he said. 'Besites, I

pelong to ze Thomas Orchestra—am a fairst veeolin. Ziz week we are here blaying.'

"'I gif you fifty tollar vor ze instrument,' he said.

"'Not on your tintype,' said I. 'That fid's been in my family since 1723, and it isn't for sale. I'm temporarily on the hog, but I'm hanging on to that violin all right.'

"He looked me over again.

"'I gif you for eet an huntairt tollar,' he said.

"'You must think I'm dead easy,' said I. 'I don't play on the violin myself, but I know 'em when I see them. You ought to be a good enough violinist to see at a glance that that violin is a first-rate Strad.'

"'Nod exactly a firsd-rate one,' he said, 'but ze tone ees loafly. Eet ees vat you call a second—a goot eggsample, bud nod ze vair highest. I gif you zwei huntairt.'

"'Come again,' said I. 'You want to multiply that about five times, and then maybe I'll do business with you. I know what it's worth.'

"He played on it again, and then he made his last raise—$300. I suppose, at that, I could have made him hit it up to the $500 mark, but I saw the way the thing was, and I wanted to give that St. Louis hoodoo a good hard twist. I finally told

him that he didn't have the price to pay me for the violin, but that if he would make me a first-rate immediate sale of it—say, $1,000 or $1,500—I'd treat him right. He wanted it himself too much to take very enthusiastically to this idea, but at last he said he knew a collector of old violins in St. Louis—he's quite a famous man in that line—who would buy the violin at sight. He went along with me to see this man. The collector, because I was a bit shaky after my little month of it, thought that he could throw it into me, and tried on the brusque act, questioning me as to where I had got the instrument, etc. I called his bluff, and marched him down to the pawnshop where I had bought it for two dollars. You ought to have seen the pawnbroker's eyes stick out when he learned of what a good thing he had let get away from him. He made my title clear, however, and told the collector that the violin had been brought in two or three years before by a colored man, and that it had been up on the block at the annual sales ever since. The auctioneer hadn't been able to get rid of it at any price until I happened along. The coon had stolen it somewhere, of course, but that wasn't up to me. The collector gave me my figure, $1,500 spot cash, for it that afternoon, and he's got it yet, I understand, and has never even

had to fight a claimant of it, although it was, he told me—and he's a man that knows about these things—as genuine, if not as absolutely perfect, a Strad, as ever came out of Italy. I gave the 'fairist veeolin' of the Thomas Orchestra his bit for putting me next.

"I eloped from St. Louis the next day with the ring and pin and the rest of the ticketed things on again, and I made faces at that St. Louis hoodoo until the train was in the middle of the State of Illinois. But I haven't taken any chances on that town since."

TALE THE SECOND

Which Explaineth How Ex-Tank No. 14 Did Win Out By Means of Ye Hansom Cab

TALE THE SECOND

WHICH EXPLAINETH HOW EX-TANK NO. 14 DID WIN OUT BY MEANS OF YE HANSOM CAB

"It's funny how a town becomes too small for you, under some circumstances, ain't it?" is the way Ex-Tank No. 14 got under way when he was reminded by the Chief Ex-Tank at the club's last fortnightly meeting that his number had been drawn.

"Now, New York's a big town, ain't it? I leave it to all of you gentlemen if New York ain't a big town, hey? But it certainly looked to me then—the time I'm going to tell you about—as if New York was no bigger than Peru, Ind., or East St. Louis, Ill. You see, after you've been steadily and properly soakful for three months or so the town begins to look diminished, contracted in area. You figure it that you've got all the routes worked and that all hands are next to you; that the newsboys on your beat have got your case all down pat; that the barkeeps are beginning to freeze up on you and that they are rapidly losing all recollection of

the not remote times when you wore a frock coat and a top hat. Understand?

"When, in short, the jag gets to such a frazzled, outworn stage it waxes reproachful and you imagine that the whole town has knocked off both work and play for the purpose of watching you slouch along the street, unshaven, and with your clothes unbrushed and your shoes only half tied and a few dents in your hat from the scrap you had on the night before. I lack, you will perceive, fellow ex-tanks, the faculty of clear and continuous portrayal; I am only an impressionist and if I exhibit sketchiness bear with me. It's a hard thing, anyhow, to make it clear just how small a town gets under these circumstances: how it shrivels up when you begin to feel that your most important job in life is to dodge the cops, even though they may not have so much as the first focus on you.

"At any rate, when, in the early winter of 1890, I had accumulated the usual pocketful of dog's-eared pawn tickets and the game began to get pretty hard, I knew that New York didn't look any bigger to me than Elizabeth, N. J.; and so I had to entertain soggy ideas of leaving the atrophied town to its fate. I was 'in the midst,' as it were, of these reflections—wondering just where I'd pull out for and how I'd get there—when I meets up with our

honored fellow-member, No. 19. Nineteen had just begun work on his regular early winter still when I met him; nevertheless, he was already broke. And so we got together. No. 19 didn't think New York was so almighty small—he hadn't yet arrived at that stage—and he said that he thought New York was good enough for him. He was willing, however, to cöoperate with me in any plan I might formulate that would enable me mercilessly to abandon New York to a sorry destiny without me.

"Now I began to wonder who I could touch up for a pass to some place or other. It all simmered down to one man—an old pal of mine who ran a lumber yard up in Fordham. I knew that, alone and unaided, I could't get the pass from him, for, never having qualified for membership in an organization of this kind, he was dead sore on the alcoholic degenerate question. I mentioned this to No. 19. Nineteen, with his customary genius, saw a way out of it. He had only his usual sedate still on at the time, while I was soggy and disposed to discourse on Carthaginian history. Nineteen hails a passing cab—neither of us had a cent, you know—and he orders the cabman to drive us out to the lumber yard in Fordham. I didn't see through the proposition, but when No. 19 told me that it was

up to me to keep still and to look just as depraved, wanton and helpless as possible, as my part of the programme, I closed up.

"When we got to the lumber yard I just leaned back in the cab and looked soggy, as per agreement with Nineteen, and he went in to have a talk with my pal. He told him in that persuasive, I'm-just-doing-this-for-an-unfortunate-man sort of way of his that I was a wreck, and that it was imperatively necessary that I should be sent to my people, who lived out in Denver; that he wouldn't answer for the consequence if I wasn't put aboard a train and sent to my people in Denver; that, unfortunately, he himself was not sufficiently strong in funds to send me to my folks in Denver; consequently he had, out of purely philanthropic motives, called at the lumber yard to see what could be done. It was a good story, that of Nineteen's, and it went. My old pal came out to the cab and looked me over. I knew that he was looking me over, but I didn't let on. I apparently slumbered. He prodded me, but that didn't work. I apparently slumbered on.

"'Too bad,' I heard him say to Nineteen. 'Why, I can remember when that old chap was ——. Well, I guess you're right about the necessity for sending him to his folks. If something's not done

with him, something'll happen to him. I'll ship him out to Denver if you see that he gets aboard the train.'

"Sure, he would see that I got aboard a train, said Nineteen, and so it was all right. My old friend telegraphed down to a railroad office, to have the railroad people give Nineteen a ticket for Denver, with sleeper berth, upon application, chargeable to his shipping account, and he handed Nineteen twenty dollars to give to me for necessary travelling expenses when I got aboard the train. And I apparently slumbered on until the cab pulled away from the lumber yard.

"'Say, where do you want to go, anyhow?' Nineteen asked me when we got under way. I told him any old place would do.

"'How about Chicago?' he asked me.

"I thought Chicago would be bully, I told him.

"'You see, if you like Chicago,' he said, 'we can get a rake-off on the ticket. I've got a ticket for Denver for you, you know.'

"So we drove down to the railroad office and got the ticket for Denver, Nineteen meanwhile having handed me ten dollars out of the twenty dollars. Having determined upon Chicago as my next place of abode, we took the ticket down the line to see what could be done with it. Nineteen

was pretty well up on the dodgers of scalpers, and he knew how to dicker with 'em. So he was able to exchange the ticket for Denver for a straight limited ticket to Chicago and get fourteen dollars in change, which was doing mighty well. I got ten dollars out of the fourteen dollars change, besides the ticket to Chicago, and then Nineteen and I started in to make our adieus to each other I don't remember that part of it very well.

"The last I remembered of New York, after I found myself aboard a train bound for Chicago was Nineteen punching a cabman somewhere on Sixth avenue, and then there was a blank. But there I was on a train bound for Chicago all right, already in the middle of the State of Pennsylvania, broad daylight, no trunk, no baggage of any kind, and seventy cents in silver only. At Altoona I got a pint through the car window, the boy charging me twenty cents for getting it for me, and by the time the train drew into Pittsburg was pintless and flat broke. Something had to be done, could see that. It was early in December, and the weather was mild, sunshiny and balmy, and so I got off at Pittsburg. I got twelve dollars on my overcoat, and took the next train out for Chicago, without an overcoat, but with two quarts and money. Then I got mixed up with the gang in the smoking car,

and I was, as usual, a good thing. I got another quart at every stop for 'em, and it was one delirious whirl of bliss until the train reached Chicago, which I don't remember. The brakie came along and prodded me and yelled 'Chicago!' at me, and then I got off.

"It was about seven o'clock at night when the train got into Chicago, and there was a blizzard in Chicago. It had been snowing hard in Chicago all day, and along toward night it had got too cold to snow. The temperature was about 4° below zero, and the stars looked frostier than I had ever seen 'em. So did the huge cops, with their tough caps pulled down over their ears. I had one drink left in the last bottle, and I absorbed it outside of the depot. Then I was good and up against it for fair. I had never been in Chicago before. I didn't know a man, boy or dog in the town. Here I was, broke, without an overcoat in a temperature of 4° below zero, no front to speak of, no jag-feeder, nothing.

"'My boy,' says I to myself as I buttoned up my sack coat outside the depot, 'here is where you get vagged and break rock on the pile.'

"But I thought I'd take a walk around, anyhow. So I dug my hands into my pocket and started to walk. The streets were jammed, and

all of the men had on inch-thick ulsters and all of the women electric seal sacques. It made me feel sad and cold, that did. Then I could see the ducks dropping into the booze factories in pairs and threes—all of 'em dressed up and with thirty or forty cents each in their clothes—and it was very hard—honest it was. I kept on walking until I reached a corner where there were a couple of newspaper offices catty-cornered from each other. I afterward found out that it was the corner of Dearborn and Madison streets. Now in front of one of these newspaper offices there were a couple of cabs. The drivers weren't anywhere near that I could see, and the flash came to me all of a sudden.

"'What's the matter with my making an honest dollar or two with one of these cabs?' I thought.

"So I stepped up to the seat of one of the cabs, wrapped the lap robe around my legs, pulled on the reins, and we were off in a bunch. I confidently expected to hear somebody yell after me, but I thought that would be as good a way to get pinched as any other. Nobody yelled after me. It was all right. I had a good cab and a good horse, and it was up to me to use 'em.

"As I say, I didn't know any more about Chicago than I did about Timbuctoo, but I just

pulled the horse around the corner where I saw the biggest crowd. I was driving along a street that I afterward found out was Wabash avenue, several blocks away from where I had swiped the cab, and keeping close to the curb for possible passengers, when a couple of warm members, all togged out in fur coats, came out of a rum repository and yelled at me. I drew up alongside the curb.

"'Hey, Bill,' said one of 'em, 'just shoot us out to the fight, will you?'

"Of course I would, said I. I didn't know any more about any fight than I did (then) about the House of David on Clark street, but I had to make a bluff.

"'How many for the pair of us?' asked the hot tamale that had hailed me.

"'Ten apiece,' said I.

"'All right,' they both said at once, and there I was in a fair way to win out by finding twenty dollars. After they both hopped into the calash, I made a mumbling excuse to hustle into the saloon.

"'Hey,' says I to the barkeep, 'where's this fight coming off to-night?'"

"The barkeep looked at me as if he thought I had been stacking up too long against a barrel house, but he told me. The fight was to take place, he said, in the 'barn' way over on the South

Side. I didn't know anything about the 'barn,' but I wasn't going to give myself away and excite suspicion. So I hustled back to the cab, wrapped up again, and started south. I knew that much—which direction the south was—and just took a chance on finding the joint where the fight was to happen. I had driven about half a mile along Wabash avenue when I fell in with a procession of cabs and hansoms. They all seemed to be going the same way, and a lot of the fellows inside of 'em were bawling and singing. So I correctly figured it that all of the barouches were bound for the fight, as I was, and all I had to do was to follow them. My two ducks had a bottle apiece with 'em to keep out the cold, and they were hitting them up pretty hard all the way out, occasionally handing one of the bottles out for me to swig, which I don't need to inform the honored members of this organization was a godsend under the prevailing conditions. When, after about an hour's pull in the wake of the procession of cabs and hansoms I pulled up outside the 'barn,' which in reality was a huge, housed-over pavilion, I was a bit nervous about the other cabbies. I feared they might tumble to the rig and get next to me. So I was pretty well pleased when my two passengers stumbled out of the rig and began to gaze upon me

with the sympathetic eye. The one I had made the bargain with handed me a twenty dollar note that he peeled off his wad, and then he said:

"'Hey, Mike, d'ye want to see the scrap?'

"Well, I didn't so much want to see the scrap as I did want to abandon that cab, but you can gamble that I didn't waste any time replying that I just ached to see the fight.

"'Come 'long, then,' my jagged passenger said, and I followed 'em. They had box seats already bought for themselves, but the good-natured geezer that had asked me if I wanted to take in the fight bought me a three dollar seat up in the front row before the ring. That let me out of the cab scrape, I knew, and so I settled down to wait for the ring carnival. There were two or three preliminary bouts between dubs, and then the two prize middleweights of the night came on. They hadn't been fighting half a round before it was apparent that the taller man of the two was outclassed by about a million pounds by the squat man as a scientific scrapper. All the tall chap was good for was to take punishment, and he could beat any mixed-aler at that that I ever saw. The squat man danced around and made a punching bag of the lanky chap from the start of the ten-round go, and the gang was shouting all the time, 'Take him out!' re-

ferring to the outclassed man with the advantage in inches. By the time the eighth round came around the thing was simply a farce. The tall man was so dopey that he could barely raise his arms, and he ran around the ring in a dazed kind of way.

"Now, sitting a couple of rows behind me, there was one of these here talky sports that knew all about how the thing was going to wind up. The eighth round was pretty nearly over, the tall fighter about the worst licked man you ever saw, when this chinny sport jumped up and yelled :

"'Twenty to one he don't last the ninth round!'

"I like to call a chinner's bluff, and, anyhow, I saw a remote, vague chance of making a decent winning a—a tog-out winning and a start, overcoat and all. So I turned around and addressed the sport with a jaw.

"'How much of that twenty to one have you got?' I asked him.

"'All you want of it,' he answered airily.

"'How about $400 to $20 that he don't last the ninth round?' I asked him.

"'You're on,' said the sport, a bit weaker than he had talked before, but all of his pals were taking it in, and so he couldn't back down. I pulled out my solitary twenty dollars, and he dug into his

wad, peeling off four $100 bills. We deposited the stakes with a man in the seat directly between us.

"'This is like getting twenty dollars in a letter,' said the chinny sport. I didn't think I had a show on earth to win, but I thought I might as well take a chance. It was like playing a 1,000 to 1 shot in a race to win, but, then, I've seen things of the sort go through at that. And with $420 I could be an ace and get a start out in the Town of Wind. With only twenty dollars—well, after I got an eight dollar ulster there wouldn't be much to it. These things I thought over as I sat and watched 'em fanning the two pugs for the ninth round.

"Now, my man looked a heap better to me when he wabbled up to take his medicine in this round. He didn't look like a winner, but he seemed to have shaken himself together with the determination of staying out the ten rounds. Everybody noticed this, and the talky hot sport with whom I had the bet looked a bit nervous over it, as I perceived out of the tail of my eye. The two fighters fiddled around a bit, the squat man getting in a couple of hard stomach jabs on the tall guy—and then it happened. It happened with such suddenness that hardly anybody could say just how it was done, and everybody agreed that it

was a fluke of the flukiest kind. But the tall man, in emerging from a hot mix-up, shot out his left, more, apparently, with the intention of warding off a swipe from the other man than for any other reason. There was steam in his shooting out of his left, and, probably accidentally, his fist caught the squat man fairly on the point of the jaw, and he went down like a clothing store dummy. The referee was doing the arm-counting on him before anybody realized what had happened. When the ten seconds were up and the squat man was still prone, with no sign of getting up, the stakeholder of the $420 turned to the sport with the penchant for conversation, saying:

"'You lose.'

"Then he handed me the wad of $420.

"The garrulous sport made the beginning of a beef about the thing being a job, but his pals threw it into him about being a chaw-bacon and a would-be welcher and he subsided; so I didn't have the least bit of trouble in hanging on to the $420. I got out of the 'barn' with it and made for a drug store. There I telephoned down to the newspaper office in front of which I had swiped the cab, asking the people in the business office if there had been a wild-eyed cabman inside hunting for his rig. They said that such was the case.

"'Well, it's out here in front of the shack where the fight was pulled off to-night,' I told 'em, and then I rang off.

"Then I rode into town in a hack and took a room for the night at the Hotel Richelieu at ten dollars a throw. The clerk looked at me, a hard-luck-looking, overcoatless proposition, when I registered, but I paid him for the room in advance and that went. The next morning I went down the line and togged out. Then I hunted up the cabman, told him I had grabbed his cab the night before when I was too far submerged in the juice of the grape and paid him thirty dollars for his anxiety and loss of a night's work. He was all right, the cabman, and made no roar. So I had about $300 with which to start plugging the game in Chicago and it was a sober act for the rest of my stay."

"Which I may state, before adjourning this meeting," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising, "that for a quick win-out, Fourteen's the pacemaker and the probable winner up to date."

TALE THE THIRD

Which Telleth of How Ex-Tank No. 9 Escaped From Ye Burg of Galveston

TALE THE THIRD

WHICH TELLETH OF HOW EX-TANK NO. 9 ESCAPED FROM YE BURG OF GALVESTON

"WHEN I read, a while back, that the Beach Hotel, a few miles outside of Galveston, had burned to the ground, I was swept by a wave of memory," said Ex-Tank No. 9, reflectively. "Not that I ever put up there. That isn't it. But I once saw the outside of that hotel structure under such peculiar and I might almost say harrowing conditions that ——"

"Hold on there a minute," interrupted Ex-Tank No. 7, who is a stickler for the carrying out of the club's plans. "Is there any hard luck in this as a result of alcoholic degeneracy?"

No. 9 regarded No. 7 with an aggrieved gaze.

"Have I ever yet," he inquired, "since the organization of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, sprung any Sunday-school ones about the good little boy and the bad little boy, or have I ever ——"

"Oh, well," replied No. 7, settling back in his

seat, "if you're going to conform to the club rules, of course, all right, go ahead. Only I couldn't quite see the connection between the Beach Hotel and ——"

"Shut up, Seven," said all of the members at once. "Nine has now got the deck. Nine, shoot it out."

"On this occasion that I started to speak about," resumed No. 9, "I remember regarding the rather handsome exterior of the Beach Hotel with such a bitter feeling of unjust disapproval that ——"

"Rule No. 1,184, 'Don't begin a yarn in the middle or at the end,'" quoted No. 7.

"I correct myself," said No. 9. "Therefore, I begin at the beginning. Everything begins and ends here in New York. This particular jag began here in New York in the month of August—let's see, in 1889, it was. Yes, I remember now. It was in 1889, the year after the blizzard, on which occasion I slept under a seventeen-foot bank of snow over in Hackensack for two days ——"

"As you were saying, in August, 1889, you"—again interrupted No. 7.

"In August, 1889," continued No. 9, "I had been sober for fully five months. Consequently I had too much money and too many good clothes.

Moreover, five months of straightaway work contains so many possibilities of monotony—but I need not dilate upon this. You all know how damaging to the inspiration an uninterrupted period of five months' work is bound to be. Then the $600 that I had soaked away produced within me a very tired feeling. Now, if I had only remained here in New York with that $600—well, I could ha' had a two months' whirl easy, with hospital money left besides for the finish. But on the very next morning after the jag began—why, I woke up on a boat. Say, d'je ever wake up on a boat after a night without knowing how you got there? It's a queer feeling, sure enough. Of course, I had the head when I came to, and the first thing I did when I woke up was to look around for a button to push. It struck me then that the room I was in was pretty small; also, that it swayed a good deal. I sat up and looked around, and then, durned if I didn't hear the chug-chug of the propeller.

"'It's a boat, all right,' I thought, 'but what kind of a boat? I guess I must ha' waded aboard one of the lower bay fishing steamers yesterday afternoon and got screwed up, and they put me to bunk.'

"Yet, when I looked around again, the blamed

stateroom didn't look like a fishing steamer stateroom. Moreover, there was no sea in the lower bay like the long swell this craft seemed to be ploughing through.

"'Well,' I thought, 'I'm just taking a little voyage to Europe for my health. That must be it.'

"The mystery of the thing was worse than the head, which was bad enough. I jumped out of the bunk and did the old act—went through my clothes to see if I had as much as thirty-five cents or so left. I went through all the regular pockets—not a sou-marquee.

"'This is nice,' I thought. 'I can't do the Continent, if that's where I'm bound, on my face. Moreover, I need a drink pretty bad right now.'

"As a last resort, I reached into my inside vest pocket, where I had never put money. My hand struck the wad. I pulled it out—brown and green ones still there. I counted it. Five hundred and eighty-four dollars!

"Talk about your chaps getting picked off life rafts in midocean! Of course, I couldn't figure it out how I had hung on to it. I haven't figured it out yet. Neither have I figured it out how my trunk happened to be underneath my bunk, but there it was. I kicked it accidently, and when I

looked down, there was the trunk. I opened it up. It was all nicely packed and I hadn't left anything behind. I thought it was all a dream and I wondered why I didn't wake up. I saw a button on the wall and I gave it a shove, just to see who'd show up and to find out whither bound, and so on. A darky with a clean white coat on answered the button. I yelled at him to come in, and in he came. I asked him to tell me, on the level, where I happened to be.

"'I know I'm on a boat,' said I, 'but what boat?'

"'Yo' all sut'nly was cheeahful las' night, suh—sut'nly cheeahful,' said the darky to me, grinning.

"'That's all right about the cheerfulness,' said I, 'but what I want to know is, what kind of a packet is this, and where's she going?'

"'Why,' said the darky, 'dis yeah steamuh's de Comal o' de Mallory line, an' she's boun' fo' Galveston. We dun got unduh way las' evenin', suh—an' yo' all was out on de deck singin' ontil one o'clock dis mawnin'.'

"'No; I'm damned if I was,' says I to the darky, but I knew he was telling the truth all the same. But I wasn't going to make any damaging admissions.

"Well, I had the man bring me three high ones,

to sort o' get me around to a deep-water way of thinking. After I got the three high ones down I had things straightened out in my head. Why not the Comal? What was the matter with the Comal? What was the matter with Galveston? Might as well be on my way to Galveston as any other old place. So I touched the button again, had the barber come and shave me in my bunk, dressed, took three more high ones, and got out of the stateroom.

"Say, there were about three dozen fellows lounging around the decks, and dinged if every one of 'em didn't say to me when I showed up on deck: 'Hello, there pal!' or 'How are you, Bill?' or 'How're you making it this morning, chum?' or something like that. I didn't know a one of 'em from my aunt in Maine that I never saw, but they were thicker'n thieves with me. And it appeared that I had been the same with them the night before in the card-room and around decks. Funny game that, funny game. They were all pretty nice chaps, too—most of 'em New York drummers setting out for their fall campaigns in the Southwestern territory. We had three high ones, the whole bunch, right off, and the voyage down to Galveston began to strike me as a heap of a good job. Along toward afternoon I took it

into my head to climb the foremast rope ladder leading up to the main yard. I climbed it, and started to swing joyously from the yard by my hands. There was a big swell on, and the Comal was listing over about thirty-three degrees to starboard and to port in the swell, and when I looked down to the deck I saw all hands looking up with white mugs. I decided to descend then, and when I got down I found the skipper with a pair of irons in his hand.

"'If you try that on again,' said he to me, 'I'll clap these on to your wrists.'

"'Don't take it to heart so,' says I to him, and then I went and had a few more with the commercial travellers.

"Well, that trip is kind o' hazy in my mind until we got down to Key West and tied up there for twelve hours. I remember that the whole bunch went ashore there, and the beer was warm in Key West, because the ice steamer was a week behind schedule time. We couldn't hit up warm beer, so we did the other thing. We tore Key West apart some, but I don't remember getting aboard the Comal again. I found myself aboard the next morning, though, and on that morning I started in to play poker with a couple o' Maiden Lane diamond drummers. They took it off me

so fast that I felt myself catching cold. Same the next day. Same, also, the day after that. On the night we got off the Galveston bar, to wait there until morning for a high tide to let us into the harbor, I counted over my bundle. I had six dollars.

"'That ain't much to begin life anew three and a half thousand miles from New York,' I thought, 'but it's got to go. I've got the front—meaning my layout of togs—left anyhow.'

"I went ashore with the gang the next morning, and the blank begins here for another twenty-four hours. I guess I must ha' gone around some with those commercial travellers. The next morning, when I woke up, the low monotone of the sea was in my ears; also, there was wet sand in my hair, and the sun was shining hard in my face. I sat up. The Gulf of Mexico was right in front of me. I looked behind. There was a big hotel there. It looked something like the Oriental Hotel down at Manhattan Beach. There was a sign on it, 'Beach Hotel.' I dug into my pockets, looking for the necessary dime. It wasn't there. Nothing was there. I was lying on the sands of the Gulf of Mexico, in front of the Beach Hotel, broke, without even the price of a ride into Galveston on one of the dinky mule-hauled street cars.

That's why, as I said at the outset, I looked at the Beach Hotel so disapprovingly on this occasion.

"I dusted the sand off my clothes and walked over to a fountain spigot in front of the hotel and took a drink of water. Yes, water! It was hard, but it had to go. Then I hunted around for the street-car track. Galveston was two miles away, but I had to make Galveston. There wasn't any car in sight, so I took the track. I didn't have the price of a fare, anyhow. The track was under water, from floods, most of the way in. I walked through brackish Gulf water full of tadpoles and soft-shell crabs all the way in. I didn't have anything particular in view when I struck Galveston, but I wanted to get there, anyhow, for the Beach Hotel, I figured, was full o' happy seashore vacationizing people, and as I wasn't happy myself I didn't want to see them. On the way into Galveston I mapped it out that I wasn't going to do any telegraphing back here for funds, even if I had to drive a truck. Talking about trucks, as I was nearing Galveston I passed a whole lot o' circus tents. I prowled in among them and got talking to a tentman. He said it was Forepaugh's show. I asked him where the show was going from Galveston and he said it was going to close up and go straight back to Philadelphia. I asked

him how it would be for a job. He sent me to one of the head guys, and I offered to feed the zebras and do other useful chores in return for a ride with the show to Philadelphia. He turned me down and I kept on into town.

"When I got into town a sign that I saw over a saloon looked vaguely familiar to me. 'The Two Brothers' Saloon' it read. I kind o' recalled having been in that place with some of the drummers on the day before, when we got off the Comal. So I went in, not because I had the price of anything, but I just went in anyhow. It was about ten o'clock in the morning, but no customers were in the place, which was a pretty swell rum joint, with a piano in the back part of the room. One of the 'Two Brothers' was behind the bar—that is, I found out afterward that he was one of the Two Brothers.

"'Hello, there, pal,' says he to me as I walked in, 'how're you cuttin' it this morning?'

"I told him there was nothing doing, and sat down at a table, for I was tired with the trudge in from the Beach Hotel. The man behind the bar sized me up, and he walked over to where I sat.

"'Up against it, eh, chum?' said he to me. 'Better have a couple to sort o' jerk yourself together.'

"They tasted pretty good, I'm a-telling you. I went back to where the piano stood, and sat down on the stool. They'd made me practice four hours a day on the piano when I was a kid, and I was a pretty good player. Well, I felt pretty woozy and down in the mouth, and so, naturally, I started in to play Schubert's 'Serenade,' and that sort, with the soft pedal down. I was playing away at this kind of music, thinking pretty hard of the jay I was, when the man behind the bar touched me on the shoulder.

"'Pard,' said he, 'I'm one of the proprietors of this shack, and I'm going to make you a proposition. You say you're up against it, even if you are one of these here wise boys from New York, and I guess you are up against it. You seem to know how to twiddle that py-ano to the queen's taste. Tell you what I'll do. I need some one to play on that machine. If you'll hammer tunes out of it, say from nine o'clock at night until two o'clock in the morning, I'll give you five dollars for every night's work you do, and pay your way down here besides. What do you think of it?'

"What did I think of it! I wasn't missing any win-out chance like that.

"'It's a go,' I told him.

"He took me across the way to the Girardin

House, one of the bang-up hotels of Galveston, and put me up there. Then he went down to the Mallory dock and had my trunk sent up to the hotel. I togged out and turned up at the 'Two Brothers' ahead of time. There were about two hundred of the Galveston men down there. The word had gone around that a 'Howling Thing' from New York had been engaged to play the piano nightly at the 'Two Brothers,' and the boys were on hand. I played. They sat around and gave me the laugh, but I didn't mind that a little bit. I earned my five all right that first night.

"The next morning the *Galveston News* was sprinkled all over with small ads. like this:

"'Come down to the Two Brothers' Saloon to-night and hear the Hot Boy from New York hit up the piano.'

"'Drop in at the Two Brothers' Saloon to-night and have a look at the Warm Baby from the effete East hammer the keys.'

"'The Howlingest Thing that ever struck this community will sock it to the harpsichord at the Two Brothers' Saloon to-night.'

"'To get the latest effect in pants, as worn by a Chile Con Carne from up York way, drop in at the Two Brothers' Saloon to-night. The Chile Con Carne plays the piano, too.'

"The laugh? Did I get the laugh? I didn't mind it, though. I didn't know anybody in Galveston, and nobody in Galveston knew me. The only inconvenient feature of it was when the boys from the ranges used to drop in once in a while. A good many of 'em 'ud come to Galveston, instead of going to Dallas or San Antone, to blow in their wages after round-ups. They didn't have it in for me at all, but they just occasionaly shot a smoke out of my teeth as I smoked and played.

"I got my five-dollar bill every night when I knocked off work, and I guess I must ha' brought a lot of good trade to that joint, which was, in fact, the best gin mill in the town of Galveston. I tapered down to about ten a day, too, and after I had been playing the piano at the Two Brothers' for an even month, I got to thinking about Sixth avenue one night. So I quit. On the level, the Two Brothers were dead sore on me for quitting, but when they found I was bent on it they made the best of it. When I took the train for New York they sent me a case of wine, and ——"

"I don't see any hard luck, due to alcoholic degeneracy, in that story," interrupted No. 7.

TALE THE FOURTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 24 PEDDLETH FEATHER FLOWERS, AND RESORTETH TO YE SPORT OF KINGS

"WHEN I decided that time to jump Slopeville and line out for the eastern seaboard—it was in the summer of '95—I had $450, enough glad rags to stock a second-hand store, several Kimberley rocks and a straight aqua record of four months behind me," said Ex-Tank No. 24, the theatrical member of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates. "San Francisco in summer is as dead as West Broadway at 1 A. M., and there was nothing doing in my line. I felt so rich, anyhow, that I wanted 'em all to see how I shaped up back here in the old parish, for when I'd struck out from New York in the wake of the setting sun a bit over a year before, I was holding them up with horseshoe nails instead of buttons, and my shoes were tied with copper wire. So I decided to prance in here, all pinked up, and daze 'em up around Thirty-fourth street with my blue-white

boulders, creased wardrobe and the browny-green Government-stamped slips of paper kertish wherewith to buy in cases of emergency. Oh, bright and gladsome dream! oh, tender and touching fancy. Oh, rosy and ——"

"Eliminate that!" shouted Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, jumping to his feet. "Just delete that 'cello obligato! You're not hurling a slow-music spiel at a bunch of 'Ingomar' and 'Ticket o' Leave Man' tie counters. Get out of the limelight and give us a plain, unvar ——"

"The Sergeant-at-Arms will subject No. 7 to fifteen minutes of our new corrective electrical treatment for buckers and interrupters," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising and frowning severely. When No. 6 was dragged from the room to the Chamber of Correction, "The Ham, No. 24, will now resume," said the Chief Ex-Tank.

"Well, I didn't put the scheme over the plate, anyhow," continued No. 24. "I dug up for a through ticket to New York, with parlor-car coupons, and then I went out to the Cliff House to pipe off the seals on the rocks just once more. Now if I hadn't ha' done that—well, anyway, I met up with a bridge-and-trestle drummer there that I'd had a vortex with down in Los Angeles

about nine months before, and says he, when we sat down to dinner in a cozy corner in the glass front overlooking the amethyst sea:

"'Regard me, mate. Study me closely. I've been riding the ice wagon for four months to a day. I have been up the pole for one hundred and twenty and odd days. This is where I slide down for a brief, fleeting spell.'

"'Shocking!' said I. 'Away, man of weak will! Hence, creature of tadpole mentality!'

"Then we ordered Martinis, and after that a couple more rounds, so's the dinner'd set right.

"During the dinner we had two quarts each of the golden geyser product, and by the time we got to the cognac and coffee we were alternately sympathizing mournfully with the seals on account of their monotonous lives on the rocks, dwelling upon the merriness of existence, and informing each other of our top-notch qualities in our respective lines.

"The little old voice, however, hummed in my ear, 'Son, the main burg that you've got the ticket for is six days due east, and this is a bum start you're making. Get contiguous to yourself; otherwise, if you ever get started at all, you'll only last half-way of the trip, where you'll have to drop off and be sad with yourself for many days and scurry

for another bunch wherewith to land in the town of your soul. Take a drop to the pulp-headedness of this.'

"'Go ay-way,' I replied to the little old voice, 'you know not whereof you croak. This may be the last time I shall gaze upon the wine-dark Pacific. Begrudge me not the three Pacifics which I now see. This night shall I make wassail, and on the morrow I shall awaken in a Turkish bath, grieved, mayhap, but ready to join the east-bound caravan at Oakland. Meanwhile, lemme alone.'

"Whereupon the little old voice, after a few weak growls, became silent. I don't remember when or where I lost the bridge-and-trestle drummer, but I lost him. And lo! I did awaken on the morrow in a Turkish bath in San Francisco. The sun was high in the dome.

"'Count,' said I to the Danish nobleman who had rubbed me and who fanned me awake, 'at what witching hour did I come alongside this frigate and board it?'

"At four o'clock that morning, the nobleman informed me.

"'And was I littered with jewels and precious stones?' I inquired of him. 'Did I deposit large moneys with the ——'

"The member of the Danish nobility disappeared

for a moment, and when he returned he told me that not only were my shiny pebbles intact in an envelope at the desk, but that there was a matter of $300 deposited to my account.

"This, gentlemen, happened in San Francisco, you are to remember. I am thinking of sending an account of it to the Society for the Collection and Publication of Narratives of Extraordinary and Unaccountable Occurrences.

"'I'll start East to-morrow morning,' I said to myself, as I got my clothes on, 'spending the day here in meditation and reflection upon the evils of the Bowl.'

"Then I walked idly down to the water front to get up an appetite for breakfast. There was a gang near the Clay street wharf and I crossed over to see wherefore. A couple of 'longshoremen in a boat were pulling a drowned man out of the water. The drowned man had been in the water for some time.

"That got on my nerves. I reflected that I might have been ——

"Well, one little green frappé isn't going to stand me on my head,' I concluded, and I rode up to the Palace and got it. Then I had twelve more. The next morning the Danish nobleman fanned me awake in a room at the Turkish bath, informing

me, at the same time, that all of my glitterers and some $250 in converted quartz were in an envelope with my name on it at the desk. As to how this happened, I pass. I always side-step deep ones.

"'To-morrow morning,' said I to myself, 'I will hie me to Oakland, board the train, and start for the East, where dawn begins. This day shall I spend in contemplation of the Horrors of Rum.'

"Whereupon I called for a morning paper wherewith to beguile the sad half-hour of awakening. The paper contained grewsome pictures of the bodies of two young women who had been murdered in a San Francisco church, one of the bodies having been discovered in the belfry.

"The pictures set me a-quiver, and I touched the button for a basin of the green frappé. The next morning the Danish nobleman fanned me awake at the Turkish bath, conveying, at the same time, the information that, while I was still in possession of my crystals, my wealth in the office envelope amounted to some three dollars only, not including the value of my ticket to New York.

"After that it is all a shadowy, dusky dream. When I happened to, a couple of weeks later, in a room in a hotel-saloon in Stockton, I found a bunch of familiar-looking tickets in my inside vest pocket. They indicated various sums which a

three-bulb plant in San Francisco had dished out to me for my sundry and divers De Beers shiners. These sums, I ascertained after a close search of my clothing, had all been expended with the exception of sixty cents. It appeared, likewise, that I had cashed my ticket for New York, doubtless at a heavy discount, for it was absent. My trunk and two grips were in the room. I didn't remember how it happened to be Stockton. I'd never been in Stockton in my life. I'd never hankered to go to Stockton. But it was Stockton, for a cinch. The boy that answered my ring told me so himself. Before he came and told me, I was clutching at the fond hope that the derned place might accidentally happen to be South street in New York, that I'd made the leap across the continent unbeknownst, so to speak, but not so, Bassanio; it was Stockton, which is a morgue-burg on the San Joaquin River, one night's ride from San Francisco on stern-wheel boats, although trains hesitate there, too.

"Sixty cents? It was up to me. I pasted one of the suits in and got three dollars on it, resolving that it would be the last. I got three dollars on another suit the next day. The next day I got three dollars on another suit. Three dollars I got on another suit the following day. On another

suit I got three dollars the day after that. I had eight suits, besides the good one that I kept on my frame. I managed to live on three dollars a day for eight days. It is marvellous how cheaply a man can live when he has to. On the ninth day I woke up about noon, and I needed a basin bad. I got it on my face, for the barkeeper downstairs had become quite chummy with me. Three dollars a day is big money in Stockton. Then I wandered into the hotel office to get a chair and study over the differences between being in New York with about $300, royal raiment, and transparent carbons, and being in Stockton, California, broke. I didn't intend to return to San Francisco, anyhow. I had made elaborate adieus there, preparatory to my departure for the East, and I felt that I couldn't stand for the Indians that I'd said good-bye to dancing around me with hoarse hoots and derisive gloats. A crafty-looking grafter took a seat beside me.

"'Wherefore the gloom?' he asked me, cheerily.

"'I just found my last cigarette broken in my pocket,' said I, witheringly. I didn't feel talky at all.

"'So bad as all that?' said the grafter, good-naturedly. 'Nothing doing? Broke?'

"'Go to the devil,' said I.

"'I'd already went, until I struck this feather-

flowers' graft,' said he, unresentfully. 'Now I'm getting the cush. Want to come in? I need a man for Sacramento.'

"I looked the guy over then, and while I was doing so he told me about the feather-flower. They were roses made of tiny feathers, exact imitations of the real thing. Chinks down in 'Frisco made 'em for him for ten cents a bunch. He had people selling 'em in stores, chiefly emporiums de booze, all over the state, for a dollar a throw, in neat little wire baskets.

"'My man in Sacramento has proved himself a dead one by running it up all the time and neglecting business,' the grafter went on. 'Now, you look like a clean, sober young fellow. Want that Sacramento territory? Give you forty cents for every bunch of 'em you sell for a dollar.'

"'You're on,' said I.

"So I went up to Sacramento with the cheerful grafter that night, and the next day I was peddling wire baskets filled with bunches of feather roses. I passed up all the flagons that came my way—I'd got the frigid pedals all of a sudden that morning in the Stockton Hotel office, when I thought of the girls rolling around in the surf at Manhattan Beach, and me at the other end of the route—and I sold thirteen of the bunches the first day. That made

$5.20 as my rake-off. The grafter patted me on the back, told me that I was a wonder and informed me that it was on the cards that he'd use me in the business as far east as New York, if I kept on making out so well. I told him to sharpen up his yen-hok.

"'When I land in New York,' I told him, 'I'll have the congealed dewdrops on me and the engraved paper in my duster, or I don't go at all.'

"The next day I talked seventeen barkeepers and other weak-minded persons into buying bundles of feather roses. I worked Sacramento for a week, and averaged five dollars a day. At the end of a week I had fifteen dollars, after paying board and other expenses. I'd had the dogs sicked on me a good many times, but I couldn't get used to the slammed door and the occasional threatening bungstarter. So I gave the cheerful grafter the parting mitt—he emitted a sigh over losing me—and the next morning, shined and shaved, and with a scheme in my lid, I took a train for San Francisco. I wouldn't have returned to San Francisco if it hadn't been for this scheme, which I thought out all of a sudden, after overhearing a couple of wise-looking geezers talking in one of the gin mills where I'd been peddling feather roses the day before.

"'I'm going to wire a check or two down to Sausalito to be put on Long Bridge to-morrow,' I heard one of these chaps say. 'He's been running like a mud-turtle lately, but he's good enough to beat any of the little bunch of four he's in with to-morrow if he's right, and as he'll be the bum outsider I'm going to spin a few chips on him.'

"Queer, isn't it, that way out in a bit of a burg like Sacramento, something like 4,000 miles from New York, you should hear a duck talking so familiarly about races being run off at Brighton Beach? This fellow's spiel got the horse bug to buzzing beneath the hat again, and that's when I thought out my scheme. I figured that any old thing would beat peddling feather roses.

"I got into San Francisco about noon, and I just caught the Tiburon, one of the ferryboats that used to take the gang of plungers and pikers over the bay to the pool-room at Sausalito. My front measured up all right. I'd hung on to the top-notch suit in the progress of those three-bulb visitations with the other togs in Stockton, and I always was a powerful supporter of the spotless linen and the shine and the shave under any and all circumstances. They're indispensable. I knew the people behind the desk at the pool-room well. I worked for them for nearly a year; they didn't

pay me wages, but I worked for them; they got the wages that other people paid me. And I went over there this time with the intention of getting a hatful of money or of getting pounded to death.

"This Long Bridge race that I'd heard the wise-looking guy in Sacramento talking about was the fourth on the card. There were only four in it—Paladin, opening at 5 to 2 and being played down at the track to 8 to 5; Declare, opening at evens and going up to 7 to 5; Little Matt, opening at 3 and going up to 7 to 2, and the rank outsider, Long Bridge, opening at 10 and drifting up to 20 to 1.

"I sat in a rocking-chair and looked the board over. I had ten dollars in one dollar bills in my pocket. I wasn't going to invest any of that, but was going to use them as props. I was going, however, to bet $100 on Long Bridge at 20 to 1 and take a chance on being crunched to a pulp if the mutt lost the race.

"I waited near the desk until the telegraph instrument began to click.

"'Off at Brighton Beach!' the operator announced. 'Paladin in the lead, Declare second, Little Matt third!'

"I rushed up to the ticket-writer with my ten

dollars in one dollar bills in my fist, starting to strip them off, but carefully concealing their denominations from view.

"'I'll bet you a hundred on Long Bridge,' I said to the ticket-writer, who knew me well.

"'Paladin at the quarter, Declare second, Little Matt third!' the operator was announcing.

"'You're on,' said the ticket-writer, giving me a slow smile, and beginning to write the ticket. 'That's like taking candy from a child. The mutt won't be one, two, three.'

"All the time I was slowly stripping bills from that little bundle of one-spots, and attentively watching the operator's lips at the same time. The ticket-writer was a good deal interested in the outcome of the race himself, having a bit of a bet down, probably, and he'd only half-finished writing my ticket when he gave a whoop and yelled, 'Go it, Paladin!'

"I held my money in my hand, carefully concealing the numbers, so that the ticket-writer had no means of knowing whether I had a fistful of centuries or not. He was considerably interested in the race, anyhow.

"'Paladin at the half, Declare second, Little Matt third!' announced the telegrapher.

"'Here's where I go to an early grave,' thought

I, at the same time keeping one lamp on the door, intending to make a bolt for it, anyhow.

"'Paladin in the stretch by a length, Declare second, Little Matt third!' croaked the operator.

"'I am so young to die,' I reflected, wondering, at the same time how good the pool-room people were on the sprint.

"'Long Bridge wins!' shouted the operator, a note of strong surprise in his voice.

"I felt my knees giving way beneath me, and I'll bet I was white around the gills all right. But I kept myself together.

"'Hully gee, where did you get that one?—the dog ran a rank last the last time out!' said the ticket-writer, looking at me wonderingly.

"'Oh,' said I, calmly, 'a friend of mine, one of the trainers at the Beach, wired me that one this morning. Wish I'd put another hundred on it.'

"The operator finished writing my $2,000 to $100 ticket where he'd left off in the excitement of hearing the race called off.

"'Say,' said I to the ticket-writer, with all the sangfroid I could muster, 'the lowest I've got here is one of the five-hundred dollar boys. Just pass the word along to the cashier that there's only two thousand coming to me, will you, and it'll save you changing a bill?'

"The ticket-writer, as I said, knew me well.

"'O. K.,' said he. 'Jimmy,' addressing the messenger boy behind the desk, 'tell the cashier that there's only $2,000 instead of $2,100, coming to the holder of ticket 942. Tell him we're shy of change here.'

"Then the ticket-writer, flicking me my ticket, began to throw the congratulations into me, and in two minutes it was all over the room that I'd yanked down $2,000 on Long Bridge's win. I took it all as if the raking down of that much quartz was an everyday matter with me, but my heart was up in my throat—and say, didn't I see the 'Swept by Ocean Breezes' sign then!

"Twenty minutes later I was sitting on the hurricane deck of the Tiburon, bound back for San Francisco, with $2,010 in my homespuns. As soon as I got off the boat I went directly to the hotel where I'd been stopping most of the time I spent in San Francisco. The clerk looked me over as if I was a ghost.

"'Say, where the dickens have you been?' he asked me. 'Why haven't you been to me for that money?'

"'What money?' I asked him.

"'That two hundred you left with me for safe-keeping one night a few weeks ago when you were

soused? Said you were going to a Turkish bath, and that you were afraid you might get touched somewhere or other. Then you disappeared, and we've had the sleuths on the lookout for you for a week. Thought you'd been sandbagged and thrown into the bay, or something like that. Here's your two hundred.'

"Two hundred dollars of my cush in the hands of a hotel clerk, and I'd been peddling feather-roses in Sacramento!

"Ten days later I was lending 'em all two-dollar bills to get their laundry out—the old bunch up here—and ——"

"Oh, Listen to the Ham!" chorused the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, and the meeting was at an end.

TALE THE FIFTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 15 Visiteth Ye Home of His Boyhood, and Thus Winneth Out

TALE THE FIFTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 15 VISITETH YE HOME OF HIS BOYHOOD, AND THUS WINNETH OUT

"WHICH I think I may say, without fear of a call-down, that this thing of going back to your old boyhood home is a pretty hard one to put over the plate, and it's usually a frost at that when you do finally get there," remarked Ex-Tank No. 15, after the ceremonies attending the initiation of three new members had been completed. "I suppose there isn't a fellow here who hasn't had a hunch to go back to the old place and have a look around at ——"

"Wait a minute," interrupted No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker. "I want to ask the Chief Ex-Tank if he doesn't think there's been a whole lot too much sentimental gush at these experience meetings lately. At me old boyhood home, down on the farm, or in the dell, or out in the woods, or on the water front, or in a blooming cave, for that matter, who wants to listen to a lot o' slush like that? I submit that it sounds too

much like beery ballads from the go-off. What's Fifteen's boyhood home got to do with rum? Where does red-eye break into a man's hunch to sneak back to his old boyhood home and——"

"No. Seven is fined a round dozen vichy-and-milks for interposing unreasonable objections," said the Chief Ex-Tank, peremptorily. "Alcoholism is inseparably mixed with any man's desire to return to his old boyhood home. This is obvious. No man not in an alcoholic state would be jay enough to think of going back to the home of his boyhood. I've wanted to go back to my old boyhood home myself, and I know all about that soggy desire. Fifteen will continue."

"You see," resumed Ex-Tank No. 15, "I hadn't got within more than hitting distance of the old town since I left it when I was a twelve-year old kid, and I wanted to see it. It got so that every time I corned up I just longed to get on a train and ride to the middle of the country, where the town's located, and look it over. Fact is, I started for the place on three different occasions. Once I shot over the mark, owing to the fact that I went to sleep for three days on the train, and I landed on the Pacific coast. I didn't land there right, either, and it was up to me to get right back here to my base on this seaboard. Sold Chinese

canary birds on commission on the San Francisco streets and from house to house to get the price of the ride back. I got acquainted with a lot of the hands working on the China steamers. Every time they made San Francisco on their return from China they brought back big bunches of these canaries in little wooden cages. They let me have 'em for one dollar (eight bits, they call it out there) apiece, and I conned people into buying 'em for from two dollars to four dollars each. I had enough to get back here with bells on inside of a couple of months.

"Next time I started out for my old boyhood home I woke up in a Turkish bath in Kansas City, ordered five drinks right away, and found when I started to dress that I was shy on the price of them. Didn't have a nick. Came near being handed over to the cops for ordering booze that I couldn't pay for. Didn't see much chance to get out of Kansas City until it occurred to me that the Fourth of July was only three days off. So I rented a little vacant store on my face, got a cargo of fireworks on tick from a big wholesale house and went into business. It was something easy. I sold out three times before Fourth of July night and cleaned up $235 net.

"I wasn't sogged enough to feel like keeping on

for the rest of the way to my boyhood home then, and so I called myself in. The very next time I went skating here the boyhood home bug got to fooling with me again. I wanted to hear the trumpet calls echoing from the military post adjoining my old boyhood home. I wanted to see the little old church. Wanted to size up the river where I learned how to swim. Wanted to see the waving fields of wheat and inhale the cool evening fragrance of the woods. Wanted to ——"

"Beery thinks," growled No. 7 under his breath.

"Wanted to land there with gig lamps on and with dough in every pocket, and show the little girls that declined to marry me when I was ten years old what they missed. It's a queer old bug, the boyhood home bug is, and every time you hear flute music and you're sogged right it's bound to give you a buzz. So I started out for my boyhood home for the third time and made it. Say, you can talk about your disappointments, but—well, I wasn't in shape to enjoy my old boyhood home when I got there, as far as that goes. You see, I stopped off in Chicago. Consequently, when I was prodded awake in the dinky little station—it looked bigger than any Westminster Abbey to me when I was a kid—in my boyhood home, I was

all out, to the last red. That knocked all my pipe-dreams of landing at the old place with a patronizing air and distributing backsheesh among the natives. I'd intended to build a wing to the little old schoolhouse where I learned what I know of fractions, but that was, of course, all off. I'd meant to stroll around and watch the kids among whom I was raised slaving at their trades, and then, when they remembered me, to have 'em knock off work and go carriage riding with me. It had been my original idea, or one of 'em, in coming to my old boyhood home to dig up the old Dutchman who gave me fiddle lessons when I was a kid and make his life merry with Rhine wine for a few days. Likewise, I'd intended to—oh, well, I'd had it all plotted out and arranged to give my old boyhood home a blow-off for a week or so, and to make 'em all feel sorry that they hadn't pulled away from there into the great, wide, open world when I did and hadn't become somebody.

"I got a job that afternoon as a waiter in the restaurant of a man I had often chased up alleys and punched when we were ten-year-olds. He didn't know me, of course, and I didn't want anybody to know me. I was in my old boyhood home incognito. My front I had left back in Chicago, gig lamps and all. I knew that I had

made a hash of my arrival at my old boyhood home, but I wasn't going to complete the job by putting anybody next to who I was. I just took that tray-juggling job for eight a week, and kept still. I figured that in two or three weeks I'd have the price of a ride back to Chicago or anywhere outside of my old boyhood home, and that kept me up.

"When Sunday came around I thought I'd look around, anyhow. Went to the church where I'd been an acolyte when a kid. Took a rear seat and watched the bunch coming in. Recognized a lot of the people. The little girl named Kittie O'Hoolihan, who had spurned my offer of marriage when we were both ten years of age, was one of the early arrivals. She weighed about 255, and she had four little girls, all looking the same age, along with her. I knew her, because the little girls looked just like she looked at their time of life. The little girls that I'd haughtily refused to have anything to do with when I was a youngster because they weren't pretty enough to suit my juvenile ideas of beauty had changed to handsome women, and the girls who had bewitched me with their beauty when they were midgets in starched frocks seemed to have all switched to homeliness. The young fellows who I'd figured out would probably be working as iron moulders or paper-

box-factory hands, pranced down the middle aisle, done up to the limit, with the swell girls, and those who I thought would be about stake class by the time I visited my old boyhood home were side-aisle plugs who looked like brickyard hands. The church, that I'd been figuring on as little short of St. Peter's at Rome in size, wasn't really much bigger than a chapel. Whole town looked to the last degree dinky and squalid. I went to the house where I was born, stood outside and looked at it; that is, I wondered how my governor could have ever fallen so low as to live in such a hen coop. Oh, how I wanted to get away from my old boyhood home! How I longed to abandon it forever!

"One of the customers of the restaurant in my old boyhood home was an ex-Judge, who looked just about the same as he had about a quarter of a century ago. He had been a crony of my father's. I always waited on him and we picked up a sort of chatty eater-and-waiter acquaintance. One afternoon, after I'd been hashing it for a couple of weeks, saving every dollar so I'd be able to pull my freight at the earliest possible moment, the old gentleman came in for a bottle of beer and a sandwich. He paid me for what he ate and drank with a five dollar bill, and I dug into my change pocket

to see if I had the breakings of the bill. I pulled out a big bunch of silver coin and along with the handful a big bronze medal that my father had given me. He had carried it as a pocket-piece for a good many years, and when he died it passed on to me, and I always had it on me. It was more than an inch and a half in diameter, and on one side it had a fine medallion profile portrait of John Paul Jones. On the other side was a picture of one of John Paul Jones' ships in action, with wreckage all around, men clinging to spars and all that sort of thing—a fine piece of work. I believe my father's people were mixed up somehow or another with the dashing John Paul. My father'd often told me that this bronze medal was one of two that were struck off by a lot of admiring citizens of Philadelphia or New York or somewhere, and presented to John Paul Jones—one of them gold, and this one that he passed on to me of bronze.

"Well, I was fumbling around among the handful of change when this old ex-Judge and former pal of my father's got his eye on it. He started and put on his glasses.

"'Just let me see that, my man,' said he to me, reaching out for the medal. I handed it to him. He inspected it carefully, and then he looked at me suspiciously.

"'Where did you get this?' he asked me in rather a craggy tone of voice.

"'My governor gave it to me a long time ago,' said I, not thinking that this old gentleman had ever seen it before.

"'What is your name?' he asked me, still somewhat severely. 'Who do you mean by your governor?'

"'Well, seeing it's you, Judge, and knowing that you're not liable to pass it around,' said I, looking at him squarely, 'I'll tell you who I am,' and I up and told him.

"'God bless me, is that so?' said he, in an astonished tone. 'Why, I might have known it, though. You look just like your dad. I was about to accuse you of having stolen this medal. I knew that there was only one like it. I'd often seen your father with this. Why, my boy, whatever in the world are you doing here, and how long has your father been dead, and where did he die, and didn't he ever read a newspaper closely enough to see an advertisement I had put in all the papers of the East a few years ago for his eye?'

"'Anything in particular that you wanted him for?' I asked the old gentleman.

"'Rather particular, I guess,' he said to me, 'and it's a mighty good thing for you that you've

come along. Your father owned a strip of land bordering on the military reservation here. It wasn't of any value whatever until the government wanted it a few years ago and condemned it, and I, without knowing where your father was, took his interest in hand and got an award of $4,500 for it, whereas it wasn't really worth forty-five dollars. I advertised far and near for your father, but never got any reply, and the money's on tap in the hands of the government at this minute, waiting for a claimant.'

"'Well, I'm the only one of my bunch left,' said I. 'You couldn't get hold of that $4,500 this afternoon, now, could you? I want to get away from my boyhood home at the rate of about sixty miles an hour.'

"'I can prove your case and get you the money within a week,' the old gentleman replied. 'Meantime, I can advance you whatever sum you may require to enable you to cease this degrading employment.'

"I had a straight-out talk with him then, and told him the whole game—how I'd landed in the home of my boyhood the wrong end first, in an excess of sentiment, and how like thirty cents I felt, and how I didn't want to be known under any circumstances until I could show up something

like the real thing. The recital appeared to tickle the old chap. We cooked up a scheme. I resigned my job as soon as he walked out. Then I went across the street to the bank and cashed a check which the ex-Judge gave me, and started in to tog out. Went to a barber shop and got policed thoroughly, had my mustache removed, and came out of there looking like a different one altogether. Then I slid up to the ex-Judge's house in a hack, got up to a room that he had fixed for me, and arrayed myself in the purple and fine linen that I had bought. Then I came downstairs, where I found the ex-Judge and his family waiting for me. The old gentleman hadn't told 'em a line of his manner of digging me up, and all I had to do was to take supper and do the royal part of a duck from New York just arrived in the home of his boyhood for a little visit. Went down town arm-in-arm with the old gentleman that night, met all the hot cards, including the member of Congress from the district, got the merry hand from everybody, stacked up against all the pretty girls that were babies in arms when I'd left the town and the swagger married women of my own age who'd been smitten with my early beauty, and had all the real gloat out of my visit to my boyhood town that I'd looked forward to in

moments of song. Next morning the newspaper announced my arrival in flattering terms ('rapidly rising young barrister, located in the great city of New York,' the paper put it), and the nice, civilized whirl I had during the ten days I was waiting on the government for payment of the claim made me feel like abjuring the bowl forever. Had a good deal to do with it, in fact. I very willingly handed the old ex-Judge $1,000 out of the bundle when it came along, together with the John Paul medal, and then I got out of the town of my boyhood at high noon, with a mandolin string orchestra serenading me at the station, and nobody but the old ex-Judge any the wiser about my arrival there a month before in a smoking car, at grey dawn, without the price of a shine or a shave. And I haven't had the boyhood home bug in my head since."

TALE THE SIXTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 4 Telleth of Ye Soldiers Brave, and Some Strange Meetings

TALE THE SIXTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 4 TELLETH OF YE SOLDIERS BRAVE, AND SOME STRANGE MEETINGS

"WHICH this isn't such a much of a huge world, at that, after you've drawn a ring around it and looked it over," remarked Ex-Tank No. 4, after the club had disposed of the regular order. "It looks big from New York, and it looks pretty derned big, too, when you're crossing an Arizona desert on the ties, with the water tanks about 140 miles apart; but I guess there are bigger worlds than this, anyhow."

"Can't lose your creditors in this one, hey?" amiably suggested No. 9, who has a sarcastic turn.

"Never had the luck to find any creditors until I became one of the charter members of this club," responded No. 4, "which in itself is a sad thing to reflect upon, and ironical, considering that I don't need 'em in my business now. But when I was paid off from the regular army, in the fall of '90, after three years unavailingly put in in an endeavor to get a commission from the ranks, the three——"

"Hold on there a minute," interrupted Ex-Tank No. 7, the club's stickler for accuracy. "D'ye mean to inform the members of this club that so lately as 1890 your habits were so correct as to enable you to serve three years in the army of the United States? Are you aware of the fact that, if such is the case, your eligibility for charter membership in this organization is in question and in need of reconsideration by the whole club? Hey?"

"Well, I'll tell you about that," said No. 4. "If you ever by any chance happen to visit Fort Canby, up in the State of Washington, on the Pacific Ocean, or Alcatraz Island, in the harbor of San Francisco, and take note of the fine, skillful construction of the roads at those heavy artillery posts, and you ask the stationary Provost Sergeants of 'em who built those roads originally, you want to stand by to hear my name mentioned; and this will probably lead the old Provost Sergeants to enthusiasm about me, and they'll tell you that I was the finest whitewasher of woodsheds, chicken coops and picket fences, and the most hustling gravel digger, and the liveliest wood splitter, and the most scientific sewer flusher, and the ——"

"I understood you to say that you were in the regular army as a soldier," put in No. 7.

"You correctly understood me," replied No. 4.

"That's what I was—a buck private. But I put in my three years in the clink—that is, most of the three years. You see, they had canteens at both Canby and Alcatraz."

"Oh!" exclaimed No. 7, looking sheepish.

"I went in to get a commission, but the canteen queered me on that proposition," said No. 4. "You see, when you've got to pass by the guardhouse in order to get back to your quarters from the canteen, as you have to do at Canby and Alcatraz, why, you're liable to ——"

"Of course," assented No. 7. "I withdraw my questions. But what's all this got to do with the smallness of the world, I'd like to know?"

"Pipe down, Seven," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising. "You're becoming a man-o'-war chaw."

"Aye!" assented all of the members in chorus, and No. 7 took a back seat and sulked during the remainder of the evening.

"There were three fellows paid off from Alcatraz Island on the same day that I was," resumed No. 4. "They had all happened to enlist on the same day that I did in different parts of the country. On the day the four of us were paid off and went over to San Francisco together we were all ineligible for initiation into membership into any club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates whatsoever, for

none of us was a Former. Jack Fahey of Chicago had been busted from post Sergeant-Major at Canby and helped me at my steady whitewashing job for a month, with a sentry behind the pair of us, for tearing an occupied frame house down across the trail in Il Waco, and he had been running mate of mine in the mill off and on ever since his chevrons were cut off. Cork Mulvihill had got the Corporal's stripes down the sides of his legs after three months' service, and then he punched a teamster after a long pay day at the canteen, and he did ten days alongside of me at carrying coal, with a sentry for company, and he never got any stripes on his legs after that. Monk Williams had been battery clerk for fully four days before he landed in the mill with me for—well, it was on a New Year's eve, and at two o'clock in the morning Monk and I ran the guard, climbed up in front of the commanding officer's quarters at Alcatraz Island, and, Monk with a guitar and I with a fiddle, we started in to serenade the old man. He didn't appreciate melody at that unseemly hour, and Monk and I got a month and a month each—which means the month in the clink and the loss of a month's pay.

"In view of all of which, it is natural to suppose that when the four of us were turned loose from Alcatraz, each with a couple a hundred in his

clothes, we weren't going to hunt up any vichy and milk to begin on. We all were going to buy railroad tickets and go right home—we swore that; we might take a hooter or two, we admitted, but we were going to get those railroad tickets the first rattle out of the box so that we'd have a cinch on getting back East. Jack Fahey belonged in Chicago, Cork Mulvihill in St. Louis, Monk Williams in Washington, and I—well, I had written home to my folks here that I'd be back in New York just six days after I was paid off from Alcatraz.

"Well, we took three or four when we got off the government boat at the Clay street wharf in San Francisco, and then we went in a body and registered at the Palace Hotel. The clerk of the hotel didn't know whether to let us sign the register or not, because we all had on buck privates' uniforms, but when we flashed the gilt on him and paid for our two rooms in advance he had to stand for the uniforms. Then we all went to a clothing joint and rigged out in forty dollar ready-made suits of clothes, patent leather kicks, five dollar lids, to say nothing of haberdashery, and when we got through with that we each had about $140 left. Then we started for the railroad ticket office to buy tickets back East. We stepped into

the Bella Union on the way for just one, and—well, we got lost at the Bella Union. I found my room at the Palace along toward three o'clock the next morning, and I found Fahey and Williams there ahead of me. They were both slumbering peacefully with their hats and shoes on, one of 'em on the bed and the other in front of the washstand. Mulvihill didn't turn up at all and he passed out of the game altogether. He didn't show up during the ten days more that the three of us put in in San Francisco, and we figured that he'd been 'rolled' and thrown into the bay. On the tenth day Williams and I lost Fahey. Can't remember where or how, but he didn't turn up at the place where we were stopping—it wasn't the Palace Hotel where we were stopping, by the way, at that time—and that left only Williams and myself. I remember the day that Williams and I went broke. It was in a Turkish bath that we both made the simultaneous discovery that there was only $2.45 between us. We weren't really faded, though, over our impending financial embarrassment until late that night, when we were both waltzing with some Mexican ladies in a downstairs imitation of a café chantant on Kearney street. The Mexican ladies had, it seemed, ordered $11.90 worth of liquids at our expense, unbeknownst to us, and in

which we had had no part in consuming, in fact; and when we showed 'em our sole remaining six bits we were hopped. Now, Williams was six feet two, and he just liked to be hopped this way, and I wasn't such a slob at the game of taking care of myself in a mix-up at that time, either. So we gave 'em an imitation of Tom Gould's in its palmy days, and got out with only a few cuts and our six bits intact. At about two o'clock in the morning the seventy-five cents was gone, and Monk and I got out into the air and looked each other over.

"'It's all off, eh?' said Monk.

"'Looks that way,' said I. 'What you going to do, "take on" again?'

"'Not on your life,' he replied. 'I'm going East.'

"'Those mountains and things between, you know,' said I, 'how about 'em?'

"'They've been walked,' said Williams. 'Want to hump it along with me?'

"'Not by a damned sight,' said I. 'When I go East I'm going to ride in a sleeper.'

"While we were chinning there and wondering where the next one was coming from, a duck came along and butted into us in the dark of Quincy street. Williams slammed him, and hit a friend without knowing it. The man was Jack Myers,

who had been a trumpeter in our battery, and who had been paid off with $500 the month before. Myers was togged out and he had it on him. He threw five or six into us before he asked us what our graft was. When we told him we were broke, says Jack:

"'I've got a house-boat up at Stockton, on the San Joaquin river. Bought it for fifty dollars when I got paid off, furnished it up with skillets and pots and a couple o' chairs and gear, and I'm living like the Jook of Cakkyack in it all by myself—just loafing. Do my own cooking, spend half the day shooting snipe along the river for fun and the meat, and am having a devil of a time all by my lonesome. Come up there with me, the pair of you. As for the damps, I've got kags of it.'

"'We're on,' said Williams and I in a breath, and the next afternoon the three of us took one of the Stockton stern-wheelers and got up to Stockton the next morning without being stuck on mud and sand bars more'n two dozen times. Myers hadn't exaggerated the joys of his house-boat. I never put in two more corking weeks of solid comfort. Maybe we'd have been there yet, but one fine morning Williams went out for a walk around Stockton and he didn't come back. This started

me to thinking that there was such a place on the map as New York, but I am free to admit that I didn't see any way of making good my bluff to Williams, that when I went East I'd ride in the varnished cars with bunks in 'em. I decided to see if I couldn't get a job in Stockton and work long enough to accumulate the price of a ticket. The first man I hit up for a job—I was decked out in fresh linen from Myers's wardrobe, and had all kinds of a shave and a shine when I went out to hunt for work—was a big fruit operator. He guffed with me for a while, asked me if I ever drank, and if not, why didn't I, and pumped me generally for ten minutes or so. Then he told me that three or four days later he was going to send a carload of choice California fruit straight across the continent by fast freight to New York, to try that market again for the hundred and twelfth time on the California fruit question, and he asked me if I thought I'd be able to do any rain-making by word of mouth as to the merits of the fruit when it got to New York, supposing he'd send me along with it.

"Well, I didn't tell him no, you can figure on that. Four days later, with fifty dollars expense money in my clothes, I bade Jack Myers and his house-boat a rather regretful good-bye and climbed

into the swellest caboose, hitched to the toniest and fastest fruit freight train that ever left the Pacific coast. I was It in that caboose. It was my private caboose, and I just spent eight days smoking and reading magazines and newspapers in it. Then I got off in New York, which I hadn't seen in nearly four years, with thirty dollars velvet still remaining. I sold every last nickel's worth of that fruit for my California man, and the way that I have since won out—humph!—forms a part of the records of this organization.

"Two years ago I was trying to get across the street at the corner of State and Monroe streets in Chicago. I was in a hurry to see a man with whom I had an appointment to sell a bill of goods, and I took chances. State and Monroe streets is about the most cluttered corner on this continent, not barring any corner in New York. I had got across one of the cable car tracks, and I was just about to make one jump of it to clear the other—not seeing the car bearing down not five feet away from the other direction—when I got caught by the scruff of my overcoat collar and jerked back with a suddenness that made my teeth rattle. When I turned around to have a look at the man that had saved me from being run down, I looked into the good-natured mug of Jack Fahey, in the

uniform of a Chicago cop. When Jack had been lost from our shuffle out in San Francisco that time he had turned up in Vallejo, across from the Mare Island Navy Yard, and he concluded that a three-year cruise in the navy was about as good as anything else. So he had gone around the world as a bluejacket, and there he was, an old ex-battery mate, looking at me and grinning, on the most jammed street corner in America. When Jack got off his blue duds we had a good time together, with the rum cut out.

"Six months later I was standing in front of the Laclede Hotel in St. Louis when a smooth-faced duck with a Newmarket, giglamps, and a pair of field-glasses slung over his shoulder, walked up behind me and gave me a clap on the back that I can feel yet, and when I turned around I had to shake hands with Cork Mulvihill, who had shaved off his red mustache and was playing the St. Louis races and running a string of his own with all kinds of luck. During the half-day cuggermuggering that I had with Cork, he told me that when he became separated from our push he landed out near the old San Francisco race-course, where a running meeting was then going on, and that, being broke, he had got a job as a rubber. He had had a run of luck in playing them with

the few dollars he made, and within a couple of years he had turned his shoestring into a tannery.

"On the night of the last big fight, when I was sitting with a couple of friends right in front of the platform and longing to have McCoy punch Sharkey into kingdom come, who should I see leering at me in a box only ten feet away but six-foot-two Monk Williams of Washington. Monk was togged out like a four-time winner, which he is, but his name in Washington is not Monk Williams. He had made the whole trip from the house-boat on the San Joaquin to Washington by freight, and when he got home his prosperous brothers took him in hand, so that Monk that was is now the proprietor of about a dozen of the biggest market stands in Washington, and just rides around in a buggy and collects the rake-off from them. As for me—humph!—well ——"

And Ex-Tank No. 4 drew himself up to his full height with pardonable pride.

TALE THE SEVENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 16 Illustrateth the Value Unto Man of Ye Good Front

TALE THE SEVENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 16 ILLUSTRATETH THE VALUE UNTO MAN OF YE GOOD FRONT

"THE inestimable value of a front," said Ex-Tank No. 16, the best-dressed member of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, "never got a-hold of me until after they had tried to vag me about six times. At that, it wasn't until my day for getting vagged was all over that I bloomed forth like—well, just look at me, that's all," and No. 16 surveyed himself with an oleaginous smile of pardonable pride, while all the other Ex-Tanks present chimed in with, "Yes, just look at him, that's all!"

"Before the practically incalculable value of a front soaked into what I am pleased to term my mind," continued Ex-Tank No. 16, "they really couldn't be blamed for sizing me up as a proper recruit for the rock pile, for if ever there was a slouch then I was It before I went in for sartorial rejuvenation," and Ex-Tank No. 16 preened himself some more, while the club chorused,

"Before he ceased to be a slouch, why, he was It!"

"One morning, when the clock in the steeple was ready to chime two," went on Sixteen, "I was leaning against a lamp-post on Arapahoe street, in Denver. I was thinking; I wasn't thinking about how much like a hobo I looked or about the dent in my hat, but I was thinking about other matters. I had only got into Denver from Omaha about two hours before, and I may have had eight or ten under my waist band; but I was all right, even if I did, in accordance with my lifelong negligence of dress, look like a slob; and I didn't know there was any municipal ordinance against a man's leaning on an Arapahoe street lamp-post and thinking.

"A cop about eight feet high came up quietly behind me and gave me a prod with his club.

"'Went away, Louie,' said he. 'Stop dossin' agin the post. You're liable to fall down and come apart. Haven't you got the price of a bunk?'

"'I am thinking,' said I.

"'So'm I,' said the cop, getting a grip on the left sleeve of my coat. 'I'm a thinkin' about runnin' you in. Come on,' and he gave me three jerks in the direction that he wanted to take.

"'Go ay-way,' said I. 'Turn me loose. You

know not what you do. What wouldst thou with me?'

"'Don't get glad with me,' said the cop, 'or I'll rough-house you up some.'

"'Say, what do I look like?' I asked him going along, though, so as to prevent him from ripping hunks off my arm. 'Is it so bad as all that?'

"'You look like zinc money after it's been run over and stepped on,' replied the cop with brutal candor, 'and it ain't no cinch, but what you'd turn a trick with the wedge and the phony keys at that,' and he gave me two or three yanks to shake me up some in my stride.

"'Which am I, then, suspicious character or vag?' I asked him.

"'Both,' he answered, 'and a chinner from the bottom lands besides. Shut up. I'm only paid for walkin' you. The desk Sergeant'll do the listenin'.'

"Whereupon I decided to abandon frivolous conversation until I was stacked up against the desk Sergeant.

"'What you got?' the desk Sergeant asked the cop when he brought me into the station house.

"'Talky vag,' said the cop. 'Found him

holdin' up a light-pole on Arapahoe street, without visible means o' bunkin'. Don't know whether he's got any of the tools on him, but he looks to me like one of 'em.'

"'Search him,' said the desk Sergeant.

"The cop reached for the inside breast pocket of my bum coat first, and got out my wallet. He dug $800 in twenties, fifties and hundreds out of the middle compartment, and then he wiped the perspiration off his forehead with a bandanna and looked at me with his jaw hanging dislocatedly on the breast of his coat. You could ha' knocked the Sergeant's eyes off with a stick.

"'What's your business and where are you from?' the Sergeant asked me when he got through taking short breaths.

"'Lawyer—Omaha,' said I.

"'Lawyer?' said he. 'You're a merry proposition, ain't you? You look like four days over the mountains on an oil train, and you have the gall to say you're a lawyer. How about that money? Where did you get it? If you're a lawyer, how about your make-up?'

"'That's my business,' said I, 'but to satisfy your curiosity I don't mind saying that my make-up is a little eccentricity that betokens latent genius. Genius runs in my family.'

"'Be careful, my bucko,' said the Sergeant, looking warm beneath the collar. 'You're a vag, and I don't know but what you're a thief, and we don't take slack from that kind here."

"'Well, I don't like to keep you waiting,' said I, feeling that I'd be shoved back if I didn't open pretty soon, 'and so I don't mind telling you that at eleven o'clock this morning I'm going to appear before the Supreme Court of the State of Colorado to argue a railroad case. If you don't believe it, just dig out of that wallet a letter with reference to the case from a gentleman who ornaments the Colorado bar, and whose non-active partner is now a United States Senator for Colorado. If that doesn't satisfy you, just ring up the gentleman and ask him for a description of the junior member of his corresponding legal firm in Omaha, or, better still, send your eight-footer along with me up to his house.'

"The whole beauty of this spiel consisted in the fact that it was true. And if there's anything more joyous in this life than having a clean bulge on a desk Sergeant in a police station I've still got some fun ahead of me. I was unhobbled and turned loose instantly, and, as usual, the Sergeant socked it to the cop for being a pinhead, a light-weight, and an in-and-outer. The old man of my

firm in Omaha heard about it, though, and when I got back (after winning out in the railroad case) he went systematically at the job of convincing me of the value of a front. My friends, you see the result!"

"The result!" hummed the Ex-Tanks.

"And speaking of results," went on No. 16, "reminds me of the time when, long before the incident I have just narrated, I was vagged within 13-inch rifle shot of the New York City Hall for not looking like the real thing, that is, when I was nearly vagged. My fellow Ex-Tanks may remember that in former years the racing of running horses was quite a popular pastime in this neighborhood. Still is, do I hear? Um! Is that so? Strange I had not heard. Well, anyhow, at the time I revert to, the racing of thoroughbred horses around a circular track was esteemed as a more than mildly exciting sport. I esteemed it that way myself. I was too busy in fighting the demon rum and in trying to hold jobs for two consecutive weeks at that period to be able to visit the tracks very frequently. But at the time there were institutions known as poolrooms, upon the blackboards of which the names of the contending horses were spread, together with the odds laid at the tracks on or against the chances of each.

One Friday, just after being fired from my job, with eleven dollars in hand, I went into one of these old-time institutions—they are but a memory now, I understand—and bet the horse ten dollars of my eleven dollars that the six horses I named would win their respectives races. That was what was called a combination. My combination paid $3,000 to $10, and it won.

"'Here,' said I to myself, 'is where I efface the scandal of racing from this neighborhood. This is my mission. I shall absorb all of the money of the bookmakers. Without bookmakers there can be no racing. Consequently, in shattering the bookmakers I shall put an end to this insidious racing business, and the conservative population shall arise and call me the real thing.'

"I was at my slouchiest in those days, and when I appeared at the race-track the next afternoon and put down $3,000 with three bookmakers on the horse Gotham to win, at 3 to 5 on—thus standing to win $1,800, which I thought was good enough for that one day—they viewed me with suspicion. They no doubt thought that I had stolen the money. Gotham lost by a nose. I crunched my $3,000 to $1,800 ticket in my clothes and went forth mournfully. I pulled up somewhere in the neighborhood of Bay Ridge toward

midnight, and a constable with chin whiskers was rapping the bottom of my feet—I omitted to say that I was lying down.

"'Come along wit' me, sport,' said the constable with chin whiskers.

"'Which?' said I, getting up.

"'Yez'll make a good road-mendher,' said the constable. 'But as a hobo yeez is not wan, two, t'ree, or yeez wouldn't be a-sleepin' in th' road.'

"The 'one, two, three' was a cue. It sounded as if the chin-whiskered constable had been against the game himself.

"'I don't train with that lot; you're mixed,' said I. 'My name's Walton, Joe Walton—Plunger Walton, the bunch call me. I fell down pretty hard this afternoon on that Gotham thing, and it dazed me.'

"The constable took me to the light of a street oil-lamp and looked me over.

"'Gotham, is it?' said he, with a show of interest. 'Oi lose foive dollars on th' nag meself. Yeez doan't look as if yeez had foive cints t' lose on that wan or anny other.'

"I pulled out my $3,000 to $1,800 ticket and showed it to him in the light. 'Gotham—$3,000 to $1,800,' it read.

"'Only dropped thirty hundred on it, that's all,'

said I, not airily, but in an everyday sort of tone. The ticket made a square bull's-eye on the constable.

"'Thin it's Walton yeez is, is it?' said he. 'Who th' divil would ha' believed it? Ye had betther be off an' away, Walton, before th' sun comes up.' And I took his advice and departed. That's how near I came to being vagged, within eight miles of the house where I was born, for not appreciating the value of a front.

"About a year later they actually got me under lock and key, as a preliminary to vagging me, simply because I didn't have on good clothes. This was down in Washington. The experience was worth an even $500 to me. I went down to Washington to get the job of Attorney-General or something like that, but, as usual with me then, I neglected to consider togs as an essential in an undertaking of that character. I knew a lot of people in Washington, but the cop didn't give me time to hunt them up. The cop, I should mention, found me slumbering on a bench in the Smithsonian grounds. The stuff that they purvey on the trains always had a dopey effect on me, anyhow, and so I sought a sequestered corner of the beautiful park surrounding the Smithsonian Institution and found sweet repose on a bench. I don't

know how long it lasted, but I distinctly recall the rataplan skill with which the cop gave me the hot foot. He was a black cop.

"'Yo' all kin traipse uhlong wid me,' he said, and I was too sleepy by a whole lot to make any kick. I went along.

"'Ah foun' dis heah man uh-sleepin' on uh pahk bench,' the coon cop said to the Sergeant at the desk.

"The Sergeant asked me what I had to say for myself, and I said it. I mentioned a lot of people in Washington who had the honor of knowing me, and he decided to hold me in a witness room until he had a chance to verify my statements. I was pretty sore when they chucked me into a witness room already occupied by a big, black 'spote.' He was togged out in checks as big as paving blocks, and large rose diamonds. He was sound asleep in a chair, and my entrance didn't cause him to bat an eye toward waking up. I hadn't been in there more than ten minutes before the black 'spote' began to dream out loud. A nightmare was stomping all over him, and he choked and spluttered in his sleep. I took him by the shoulder and shook him awake. He looked at me wildly.

"'Ah sut'nly was uh-dreamin',' he said. 'Ah was uh-dreamin' dat Ah was uh-runnin' one o'

dese heah cable cahs, an' dat uh leetle teeny white baby done got in front o' de cah. Ah couldn't stop de cah, an' Ah was just uh-comin' down on de baby w'en Ah woke up.'

" Then he rubbed his eyes, looked around, and a slow grin crept over his black countenance.

"' Ah won't do uh t'ing but play de Baby Row w'en dey tuhns me loose from heah,' he said.

" That set me to thinking about the monumental luck that follows the Afro-American brother when he plays his superstitions. I asked the black 'spote' where there was a policy shop in Washington, and he told me. I was turned loose about half an hour later, and I reached the policy shop in time for the 8 P. M. drawing. I had seven dollars, and I put five dollars of the bunch on the Baby Row. The Baby Row happened the first rattle out of the dish, and it paid 100 to 1.

" But I might have landed the Attorney-Generalship had I then understood—as I now understand —the value of a front."

TALE THE EIGHTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 12 Narrateth His Experience as a Strolling Player in the Drama of Ye Bard of Avon

TALE THE EIGHTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 12 NARRATETH HIS EXPERIENCE AS A STROLLING PLAYER IN THE DRAMA OF YE BARD OF AVON

"WITHOUT entertaining any desire to detract from the glamour with which posterity has invested the genius of the Bard," remarked Ex-Tank No. 12, drumming with obvious unconsciousness on the table with the fingers of his left hand, so as to give the overhead lights a chance to bring out the beauty of all the facets of the faultlessly-cut 3-k. blue diamond on the third finger, "and with no purpose or wish to induce the members of this club to change their preconceived notions with reference to the Swan of Avon, I yet take the liberty of rising to state that Bill undeniably made a few bad breaks. I'm not speaking of the way he permitted Macbeth to wabble around and allow himself to be bulldozed by his wife, nor of his failure to land the Melancholy Dane in a nut factory at the wind-up of the play (there must have been some kind of a Bloomingdale outfit in

Denmark at that time for folks who had wheels), nor of the yellow finish he dished out to Antony, nor of the four-flushing talk he put into the mouth of Coriolanus, nor of any of the rest of the little idiosyncracies in the writing of the Bard which the pygmies since his day and date have called attention to. I'm just throwing it into him a few to sort o' square up a personal grievance. I'm sore on him because he heaved some superfluous characters into his plays, and of these the superfluousest was and is Count Paris in Romeo and Juliet. I know that that part's superfluous, because I've played it myself. It's a pretty unusual thing for a man to be humiliated through no less a famous gazebu than William Shakespeare, but that's just what happened to me. Through Shakespeare I was made to feel like ten Tien-Tsin taels. There was a win-out end to it finally, but——"

"Knock off talking like a man in a cave," urged the club, gently, in chorus.

"You can't spreadeagle this outfit by going at a talkfest both ends from the middle," protested Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker. "You're ten lengths behind your field. Hunch up and do some riding or you'll be beat a quarter of a mile."

"——but," resumed Ex-Tank No. 12 where he

had left off, "the thing left its scar. Here's what one of the little jay papers said about me," diving into his vest pocket and producing a yellowed clipping about a stick long and reading:

"'The underfed, reluctant, tentative proposition in red cotton tights, a frayed green tunic of Visigoth architecture, and a Mexican slouch hat minus the rim-bells, who essayed the rôle of Count Paris—well, we frankly own to being up against it in the attempt which we had intended to undertake to describe this young man's weird and wild interpretation. Briefly, then, he made the Bard look as if he had been hit on the wishbone by a steamboat when he was writing that part. We doff our bonnets reverently at the mere mention of the great Singer's name, and yet we're bound to say that, in our humble judgment, he should have fixed it so that Count Paris could be kicked to death by rabbits in the first act. It may be that in the ranks of Thespians there are male bipeds capable of assuming the rôle of the Count of Paris and of making that pinhead look less like a zinc dime than he really is in the play, but we doubt it. Assumed, however, by a man with the physique of a hod-carrier and the grace and carriage of a cook-stove trying to climb a tree ——'"

"I object," interrupted the parliamentarian and

kicker. "I ask the members of this organization one and all, if this is a literary outfit or a club of ex-disciples of the Demon Rum, and I also inquire when we may expect to have some mug get up here and try to heave 'Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night' into us? What's the ——"

"It happened in Minonk, Illinois," went on Ex-Tank No. 12, carefully returning the clipping to his vest pocket, "late in the autumn of '89. It isn't germane to the main incident what I was doing in Minonk, Illinois, but I may state that I was—er—going from Chicago to St. Louis without money, on a wager—with myself—when I fell into Minonk. 'Fell' is about right in this connection. The brakeman demanded coin, and I had no coin. So I fell off the flat-car, and the place where I fell happened to be Minonk. It was then about seven o'clock in the morning, and the fast freight went right through Minonk. I didn't even get scraped—landed in some bushes on the outskirts of town, and it was a soft spot. I got up and hoofed it to the station. An accommodation train had just got in, and there were twelve sad people on the platform. They looked their part. They were 'hams.' I can tell a ham two miles away in a valley without a pince-nez. They were dickering with the driver of a craft that

looked like a Hank Monk stage-coach about the ride up to the hotel, likewise for the transportation of their gear to the op'ry house. There were three trunks in the bunch, which included costumes, street apparel, and the whole works for the presentation of 'Shakespearean repertoire.' The 'bus driver wanted seventy-five cents for the whole job, and the main guy of the push was trying to get him to do it C. O. D. The driver renigged, and when the main guy got him down to fifty cents he produced the half and the bunch started for the inn. I was standing rubbering at 'em, with my hands in my pockets, and filled with the earnest desire for coffee and hot biscuits that you've read about, when the main guy, who had on an olive-green frock coat (not the original color) and a plug hat of an extreme vintage, piped me off. I neglected to state that, all in all, I had a pretty good front for a flat car tourist. Before starting out from Chicago I'd got hold of four dollars, and I went 'down the bay' with it. Got a papier-mache suit, shoes, hat, and a pink flannel shirt for $2.80, and as I'd only been out four days from Chicago the goods still held together and looked good enough.

"'Ha, me Cassio,' says the boss ham of the bunch, stepping away from the 'bus and looking me

over, 'methinks you resemble the castaway upon the shores of Time that we lost back in Fairbury yesterday.'

"'That so?' said I. 'He must ha' been a la-la. I'd like to meet up with a double that had the price. I could use him.'

"The poor guy looked hungry himself, but he had learned the lesson of cheerfulness under adversity. He beamed upon me just as if he was on the point of handing me money, and he said:

"'Canst act?'

"It was up to me to laugh, and I did.

"'I could put up the biggest bluff you ever saw at a banquet scene, right now, without any rehearsal.' I told him, 'but in other parts I don't think I'd ever be able to chase Booth and Barrett over the Mexican line.'

"'Say,' said the poor devil, dropping his voice confidentially and belaying his Shakespearean patter, 'you'll do. We're a man shy. He didn't show up when we left Fairbury, and he was seeing 'em anyhow during the performance last night. Er—owing to a little misfortune we were compelled to leave a few of our accessories back there, so that here, where we are billed for two nights, we'll have to give 'em Romeo and Juliet both times—only costumes we've got left, y'see. Now,

here's a problem in doubling up for all hands that I'm afraid we're not equal to, and we just need one more man. D'ye think you could get the lines of Count Paris and walk through the part for us? Why, of course you could! Just get into the 'bus and we'll talk it over at breakfast.

"'Breakfast!'—that's the word that landed me. I got into the 'bus—that is, the boss ham linked arms with me and shanghaied me into the 'bus.

"Our new attaché,' said he, introducing me around to the rest of the bunch. 'Mr.——er—— I didn't catch your name?'

"I handed him my stage name—Reginald Montmorency, or some old thing like that.

"Ten minutes later I was sitting down at the breakfast-table with the bunch, after a wash-up and a brush-off in the room assigned me and another chap, and there I was nailed for a mess of pottage! The man probably knew from the cut of my jib that if I ate the breakfast I wouldn't renig on what he wanted of me, and he was right. Real coffee, yaller-legged chickens, hot biscuits and corn bread, pancakes and honey—say, I'd have gone on and sung Lohengrin without knowing a bar of it for that breakfast.

"'Simple part—Count Paris,' the boss ham started in to tell me when I went up to his room

with him and he brought out a couple of corncob pipes. 'The count has always been esteemed more or less of a dub—er—no insinuation, you know—with reference to my picking you out for the part, you see—but we strive to live up to the traditions of the Dray-ma, and I don't feel like cutting him out altogether. Now, his first entrance——'

"Well, he got out a prompt book and for an hour he drilled Count Paris into me. I regarded the whole proposition out of the tail of my eye, but I had that breakfast in me, and I wasn't going to take to the cactus and leave the man who had provided it Count Parisless. After the boss ham got through with me, the whole bunch went over to the op'ry house, which was a kind of a Hibernian hall layout over a drug store, and we rehearsed. Well, say, I was pretty bad—I'm not trying to dodge that—but it was a stand-off and play the high card. It was a split between me and the rest of 'em. The only difference was that they knew their lines and I didn't. Of all the—well, that James Owen O'Conner bunch that we had back here in New York twelve or thirteen years ago wasn't one, two, three. How they'd ever got as far away from Kansas City, where they'd organized, as Minonk, without being cabbaged and egged into the railroad hospitals along the line, had me guessing, and my

finish began to loom up before me. But, as I say, I'd broken bread with the main guy, and, at that, there were two days' meals and a ten-spot in sight for my two Count Paris stunts, and I couldn't pass the game up. I got the Count's lines by six o'clock that evening so I could say them backward and translate them into Plattdeutsch as I went along, and when I put on the uniform and stood in the wings waiting to go on, I felt fit to put up the scrap of my life. I thought I was trained to a hair. Well, I tripped in going on, which was a kind of a bad break seeing that I landed on the scene—which, by the way, looked as much like Verona as Pell street does—head foremost. I lay there waiting for 'em to count the ten seconds on me and carry me to my corner, when I got poked with a pole from behind, and then I got up and started in with my little spiel. Say, even the jays in front—there were about 300 of 'em—got up and hollered. It must ha' been funny for them, and that's a fact, but for me it was just the merry garrote and nothing else in life. Their howls choked me off and made me forget all those carefully-memorized lines. The main guy stood in the wings, tearing out hunks of his pompadour Romeo wig and bawling my lines at me, and, finally, amid the yowls of all the farmers in front, I got a harpoon into the

lines, and just ran away with 'em. I spat 'em all out like a phonograph that's working under a pressure of 2,000 amperes and some odd volts, and then I bolted. I was a frost, I felt that.

"'Great, my boy!' said the boss ham, patting me on the shoulder. 'You're great! You're a wonder! You're engaged for forty-two weeks! Just one or two more rehearsals, and you'll be a tower of strength and a steel stanchion! Just a few little craggy edges to be rubbed off at rehearsal, and you'll ——'

"I looked him over carefully to see whether he was insane or just guying me, but he averted my suspicions by shaking my hand like a pump handle and then rushing on to do his own little stunt.

"I pinched myself to find out whether I'd been fooling with a yen-hok, but there I was Count Paris, and a holy show, all right, all right. The rest of that night's all a dream. All I can remember of it is the wild tumult of the hayseeds out in front every time I showed up, and the main ham shaking my mitt and telling me what a wonder I was.

"When, in the patent insides Minonk paper I saw the next morning that criticism that I had started to read to you, I naturally reflected that, after all, despite the boss ham's encouragement, I

might not be altogether a spectacular success as an intrepreter of the Bard, and I told Romeo that I was going to pass my job up—that no mortal coin could ever bribe me to tog out in the Count Paris rig again.

"'The man who wrote that criticism,' said the main guy, solemnly, 'has about as much of an idea of the inner, occult meaning of the Dray-ma as the mound-builders had of long-distance telephones. My boy, the house is sold out for to-night—350 pat—and if you desert us now we're ruined—absolutely ruined! Come ahead, now, and I'll just put you on to how that second scene ought to be done to get all the meat out of it. You enter here ——'

"Well, he was a pretty good con man, and he nailed me for that positively last and final appearance. He told me that this was his last show on earth to haul down a few dollars, and that it would be just plain manslaughter if I went back on him. Then we had eleven drinks of corn-liquor together, and when I got those beneath my belt I was ready for any old thing.

"So I went on again. The house was packed. The audience was deadly quiet until I went on, and then—well, you'd never suppose that one state could produce so many invalid eggs, passe turnips,

and cabbages that had seen better days as sailed right in my direction when I popped out. I didn't get hit at all. I was foxy enough to be looking for something like that, and I bobbed back into the wings when I saw the first hayseed stand up in the orchestra and give the signal. The Pell street scene got the whole shower. The three handed orchestra struck up a tune, but I didn't wait to hear the finish of it. I hadn't lost any orchestra tunes. I took a walk out in my Count Paris clothes to see how the evening was holding up, and I heard the rumbling of a freight in the distance. The freight slowed up in passing through Minonk and I made it stick all right. I wasn't thinking how I was going to look under the mellow sunlight of the next morning in those red tights and the 'Visigoth tunic.' All I wanted to do was to vacate Minonk.

"I left the freight at Peoria at three o'clock the next morning, and at dawn, while I was hovering on the outskirts of the town, I got a lift from a medecine fakir who was just driving into Peoria in his perambulating pharmacy. He told me afterward that it was his first idea, when he saw me ploughing along the road, to shoot me full of holes, but upon getting a good look at my make-up he had concluded that he could use me in his business. He did use me. I stood up beside him in his

wagon togged out in that Count Paris rig, and served out medicine for him for a month. I attracted trade for him. People came miles to see me. The fakir gave me another suit to wear while off duty, but he insisted on the red cotton tights and the Visigoth tunic while he was peddling corn salve and stuff from his wagon. He wanted me to cover the whole state of Illinois with him when we had finished Peoria, but I passed and he paid me off.

"The trouble with me, when I was on the stage, was that I didn't become wedded to my art."

TALE THE NINTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 17 Hath His Say Anent the Incalculable Effect of Ye Good Front

TALE THE NINTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 17 HATH HIS SAY ANENT THE INCALCULABLE EFFECT OF YE GOOD FRONT

"We often revert, in these proceedings," said Ex-Tank No. 17 of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, twisting his three-stone diamond ring with a preoccupied air, "to the incalculable value—particularly to persons who are wont to become insolvent at the wind-up of tumultuous, personally conducted carnivals of joy—of that seemliness in raiment and general appearance which is technically known as a front. A suddenly-arrested, punctured jag that discovers you frontless at the awakening is one of life's tragedies. Frontless men do win out, of course; we all know that; but the progress of the frontless win-out is craggy and disheartening. The frontless man is the recipient of the dead face, otherwise the cold storage countenance, until he is sorely tempted to hold up the clothing store dummies that flap their arms, beckoningly, on the sidewalks before the

windows. It is simply trite to say that a front is of value to the busted man. It's his whole stock in trade. It's the complete works. It's the second wheel to a sulky.

"I never in my life, at any time, or anywhere, landed without a front. I have made a meal off immature turnips, hand-dug, and I have been reduced to the necessity of absorbing none but the three-cent article of cochineal fluid, compounded chiefly of sweet chewing tobacco and wood alcohol, and dipped from a barrel by means of a tin cup. But I always gave ear unto the foxy whisper that buzzed beneath my chapeau the advice, 'Keep up your front.' I have got up at dawn in the morning when I needed about three so bad that I could hear jaguars baying at the morning star; but I've erased the hair from my face with a razor that *I* could hardly hold in my mitt, and changed the linen, and rubbed off the shoes, and brushed off the togs, and inked the hat when it needed it, before going forth after those sorely required life-savers. Because why? Because I always felt and knew that, without a front, a man might just as well resign himself to sobriety and to featureless, plodding days; that he's a deceased one; and that the cordial paw and the wreathed smile of men are not for him. Your front may be naught but

a whited sepulchre—but hang on to it. Go down the bay and procure suit, hat, shoes, collar, cuffs, and necktie, the complete rig while you wait—for $2.90, and blow in the other dime for a carnation for your buttonhole—but make the stab for the front. And when you land again on top of the tally-ho, with horns a-blowing, corks a-popping, and the sun a-shining on both sides of the road, make up your mind that the next time you get ditched you'll stick to your front like a flea to a French poodle—that you'll spout the watch and the ring and the pin, if it comes to that, but cling to the front-making togs; thus you'll ——"

"Is Seventeen aware that he is addressing an aggregation of Ex-Tanks, who have left all of these things behind," interrupted Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, "or has he tranced himself back to his own mixed-ale period, so that he thinks he's spieling advice for a bunch of active, non-extinct Tanks who've——"

"The Sweep-Up will place Seven in the sweat-box and keep him there with the full head of steam turned on for thirty-five minutes," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising and frowning heavily. "Seventeen, you may proceed."

When the parliamentarian and kicker had been dragged from the room—in accordance with rre-

quent non-availing threats that the same would happen to him if he did not belay his interruptions —and securely locked in the folding steam bath, Ex-Tank No. 17 proceeded:

"Well, I was going to toss you a few in illustration of how inestimably valuable my dogged adhesion to a front has been on a few occasions. Take a hard game that I bucked into once out in Spokane, for example. I might have been made to break enough rock to macadamize two miles of Spokane road if hadn't dropped anchor there with a front. I had been indulging in two months of wooze and sog and rummy sub-conscious poesy in St. Paul, and that's where I left my gig-lamps and everything else but the front. I clung to the gripful of togs, as well as those I had on, when I needed, and needed bad, the moist things I could have traded them for. I got a ride out of St. Paul on a mail train. It was against regulations, but the railway postal clerk who offered me the ride—I'd known him back this way—took a chance. It was arranged that I should duck beneath a pile of empty mail bags in a corner of the car should any inspector hop aboard along the route; but this didn't happen and I had a pretty comfortable ride. We were headed west, and my friend the clerk was going as far as Spokane; and so was I, of

course, not, as I say, having the cash wherewith to proceed any farther. As far as clothes went, I looked like ready money, and my grip was stuffed full of clean linen. When we were pulling into Spokane—it was about seven o'clock in the evening—I gave myself the dusting and the primping of my life, and my friend the clerk passed me a one.

"'You can hurl 'em a bigger bluff with that than I could with a thousand,' he said, flatteringly, and I bowed my thanks, shook him cordially by the hand and left the train. I stepped into the 'bus of the best hotel in Spokane, and was driven thereto in some state—the only passenger—with my bulging, well-labelled grip alongside of me. A porter was at the door to drag the grip in, and I followed after him, shoulders back, head way up in the air, cane and umbrella strapped together, swinging like a mace. From the door I saw the clerk beginning to screw his face up for a welcome. It looked good, so far. The bar was right to the left of the hotel desk. I sheered off, before going up to the desk, and strolled over there. The barkeep inclined his ear.

"'Er—um—let's see,' said I, clearing my throat sonorously and patting my stomach, 'just make me up a very dry Martigny—dash of Curacoa—cherry in it."

"'That's a new one on me, Cap,' said the barkeep. 'Can make you a plain cocktail.'

"I shuddered.

"'No, just a plain drop of that gold seal, then,' said I, with a lot of exterior disappointment, pointing to the bottle.

"The barkeep passed the bottle over and wiped the glass very carefully before putting it down. I poured out a very small one—I wanted a hooter, but I was looking for effect, not joy, just then—and tossed it off, with a lot of critical after-smacking. Then I pulled a crumpled dollar out of my vest-pocket—after reaching into my breast pocket as if for my wallet—and tossed it on the bar. Then I picked up my seventy-five cents in change and walked over to the desk, where the clerk was holding a pen, handle outward, for me.

"'Er—humph!—have you a room with a bawth?' I asked him.

"'Sorry, sir,' he replied, 'but we're just having the baths put in. Got a nice two-room suite, second floor front, for you, though.'

"I looked a whole lot grieved about the no-bath proposition, and harped on it quite a few, and then took the two-room suite—ten dollars per diem, American plan. I couldn't help it if that clerk figured me to be a post office inspector, which I

afterward found he did. I'd got in on a mail train, and his assumption was natural. I had the front and the haughtiness that comes from a front; otherwise I might have been 'vagged' in Spokane just twenty minutes after getting off the train—for the place was full of hoboes and grafters, and they were running them in in sets of fours.

"I went up to my suite, called for a lot of hotel stationery wherewith to write letters, and stayed up there half an hour or so in order to make it appear that I was writing letters. Then I went downstairs, had a good dinner—I kicked mildly because the house couldn't furnish the brand of Sauterne I liked, and the steward sent me word that he'd order it, and I thought somewhat mournfully about those seventy-five cents. I felt that something had got to happen.

"I walked out to the front of the hotel and caught the rattle of the chips, and the click of the marble in the wheel, proceeding from a brilliantly lighted and wide open plant across the street. I strolled over there as it was as swagger a layout as I ever saw—five bank outfits, with varying limits, wheel, red-and-black, craps, stud, the whole works. There were big crowds around all the faro layouts, and I could hardly see the tables for the men standing behind the chairs and making bets.

"'Here,' said I to myself, 'is where I either become the depository for sundry and divers leaden capsules or acquire a stake.'

"So I walked up to the big-limit-table. All the chairs were held down, and men were standing two deep behind them, betting when they could. They were calling out to the dealer to place markers for them when they couldn't reach over. I got a peep at the chart of the man sitting in front of me, and I liked the king open.

"'I'll bet you a hundred the king wins,' said I to the dealer, smoothly, sticking my head between the shoulders of a couple of chaps in front of me.

"'You're on,' said the dealer, and he put a marker on the king for the hundred that I didn't have. If the king lost I stood to get riddled while making for the door at a lope—but I needed the money. I watched the turns, when I could rubberneck over the shoulders of the fellows in front of me, with a whole heap of excitement.

"The king came out on the right side.

"'Whose marker is this?' asked the dealer.

"'Mine,' said I, squeezing through so that he could see me. 'Just let it stand.'

"It was a cold bluff and a hard chance to take when I had the $200 right in my mitt, and could

have cashed and come away. But I guess the old fever had got into me.

"The king won again.

"'Just let me have checks for about a hundred,' said I to the dealer, and just then the man seated in front of me passed out and I took his seat. The dealer passed me over ten ten-dollar chips and $100 in eagles, which I stuffed into my pocket wearily. I played on for two hours. Then I yawned quite heavily, said something about being sleepy, cashed in $900 worth of chips, walked over to the hotel, split a quart of dry with the hotel clerk, went up to my suite, and made monkey faces at myself in the glass for three-quarters of an hour.

"That's how a front pulled me out in Spokane.

"Here's another little one about how a front helped me:

"I got into Omaha, hopelessly sober, busted, but still with the front, one beautiful June morning at six o'clock. There was nothing doing. I was guessing. My grip had been attached at Des Moines, and so I couldn't put up at a hotel. It is a weird thing to be broke in Omaha.

"I strolled up from the station and reached the business section before seven o'clock. I passed by a big department store. The doors were wide open, and the porters were cleaning the place out pre-

paratory to the beginning of business at eight o'clock. I stopped before the carpet window. There was a sign in the window: 'Carpets, second floor; run up and look at the stock.' A middle-aged, countrified-looking couple strolled up to the window as I stood there, and began pointing out to each other the kind of carpets they were going to buy.

"'I wisht these consarned, lazy store-folks 'ud come daown and open up business,' I heard the man say.

"I walked up to him and said:

"'Are you thinking of purchasing carpets, sir?'

"'Wall, thet's whut we come all th' way from Hastings fur, young man,' said the farmer. 'But these taown folks 'pear to lie abed so long.'

"'Why,' said I, 'I'm the manager of this establishment's carpet department. I'm always down ahead of the clerks. If you'll kindly step up to the second floor with me, I'll be pleased to show you our goods.'

"That was too dead easy for anything. They followed me through the main entrance. I tripped in in a jaunty, this-is-where-I-belong sort of way, and my business-like, at-home manner conned the porters. They didn't stop me. I conducted the country couple up to the second floor I didn't

know the difference between a strip of ingrain carpet and a piece of Gobelin tapestry—but, as I say, it's something fierce and savage to be broke in Omaha, and I needed the money again. I showed the country people the carpets, and they picked out what they liked. On every roll there was a tag showing the price per yard, and that enabled me to prance through my bluff. They tried to dicker me down, but I wouldn't stand for it.

"'Ours is a strictly one-price house,' I told 'em, 'and it would be more than my position is worth to make a single reduction.'

"While I was engaged in showing them the carpets, the carpet-clerks swarmed in. They figured that I was probably a new clerk, and paid little or no attention to me. When I had sold the rural couple $250 worth of carpets, I asked one of the clerks where I could find the manager. He told me. I found the manager.

"'On what basis am I working in your carpet department?' I asked him. 'Salary or commission?'

"He sized me up with a surprised mug.

"'How long have you been working in the carpet department?' he asked me.

"'Since about a quarter past seven this morning,' I replied, and then I told him about it.

"'Well, of all the infernal, colossal gall and

cheek!' he kept saying, and then he broke into a grin. When I told how I had the old pair upstairs, and nailed for $250 worth of carpets, he said, 'I'll be damned!' I knew that it was all right.

"'Suppose you just make the commission ten per cent. on the sale,' I suggested to him persuasively, and he broke into a roar.

"'Go back and finish attending to your customers,' he directed, and I did. The farmer paid me spot cash, and I saw them to the door with arm-waves and repeated invitations to 'come in and see us again.' The manager was watching it all and holding his sides. After the couple had gone, he called me into his office and handed me $25.

"'You may stay here on that basis, if you like,' said he.

"'I like,' said I.

"'But you needn't mention it to any of the other clerks that you're on commission,' he went on. 'They're on salaries, and not very large ones. Understand?'

"I understood.

"That's how front won me out in Omaha. If I had tried to turn that trick, looking like a hobo, I'd have been run in for a moral, and got about two years.

"I sold carpets, without knowing anything whatever about carpets at that plant for a month, and my commissions averaged nearly $80 a week. I grabbed everybody that dropped off at the second floor, going and coming, both ends from the middle, and made 'em buy carpets, and when I quit with a stake at the end of the month the other clerks in the carpet department were ready to assassinate me for being the whole works, not to say It with the manager."

Then all the Ex-Tanks joined in the chorus:

Oh, the frontless man
Is an also ran,
But the duck with the front is a live one.

Then the meeting adjourned.

TALE THE TENTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 19 Hath Strange and Wonderful Luck Through Man's Friend, Ye Dog

TALE THE TENTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 19 HATH STRANGE AND WONDERFUL LUCK THROUGH MAN'S FRIEND, YE DOG

"If it hadn't been for those dogs," remarked Ex-Tank No. 19, "maybe I'd be trying to sell patent lamp chimney cleaners from door to door in St. Louis yet."

"Well, it takes dogs to win races in St. Loo, all correct," said the Chief Ex-Tank, with a reminiscent expression in his eyes.

"This bunch of dogs that won me out of St. Louis, though," said No. 19, "didn't happen to be that kind of dogs. They were real dogs, dog dogs, with one-inch tails, enough of the rubberneck strain mixed with their thoroughbred blood to supply the population of an up-state village, and likewise the destructiveness of street-car strikers. That is to say, they were fox-terrier pups, three of 'em in a row, the handsomest I ever saw, before or since, and no one of 'em better'n the other when it came to cute devilishness. I found them."

"Lucky chap, aren't you?" broke in No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, sarcastically. "You were always finding something at just the right minute when you were up against it, weren't you? But, say, when you try to heave it into us that you found three thoroughbred fox-terrier pups altogether in a bunch, why, you'll just excuse me, for one, if I ——"

"I found them, or as good as found them," calmly resumed No. 19. "They just fell my way. I happened on 'em. I drew them. They dropped to me. I won 'em. Any old way, for peace and a quiet life. And seeing that, up to the win-out of which that incident was the beginning, I never got anything out of St. Louis except a large green stack of uncashable tickets, and, after that, a must job peddling patent lamp chimney cleaners from shack to shack, taking a chance on boiling water and rolling pins right along, maybe Seven'll let me get away with my statement about those pups."

"If Seven cuts in again he'll do three-quarters of an hour in the new folding bath," said the Chief Ex-Tank, sternly.

"I took $700 and a two-ended high-ball skate with me into St. Louis that time," resumed No. 19, "after having been real good up in Chicago for four months. When I got through with the East

St. Louis game—it only took me ten days to get through with it—I had the bundle of green tickets all ready for framing, most of 'em at three to five on or thereabouts, and several pink giraffes following me around and beating me out by necks at every stage of the route. Not having the price of a rest in a bug-ward at twenty-five per, with the soothing music of the chapel organ playing down below, and being opposed for reasons which will here be apprehended to the no-pay bug-wards, I got enough on my other suit to buy a fifty-cent-per room for a week. Then I laid down and had it out with the pink giraffes all by my lonesome. That's only a bad memory now, but it was black tragedy while it was going on. At the end of four days I got up, bought a two-cent paper, and looked over the 'Help Wanted' column. I didn't know then that nobody ever wants any help in St. Louis except strangers who go up against the town, and the most of these only want transportation out. The only thing I saw that was a fit for me, or anything like it, was the patent lamp chimney cleaner. I took a bunch of 'em out, with the understanding that I was to get a dime for every one of them I sold. I sold twelve the first day, after trying 'em on at about 1,200 different wickieups and then I ate and meditated. I longed to separate myself

from St. Loo, but they watch the freight-yards pretty closely there, and the man who gets out of that town on a blind baggage is a four-ply baby and a wonder. So I took up the trudge with my armful of patent lamp chimney cleaners bright and early the next morning, with the idea of selling enough of them to buy a two dollar ticket to any old place. I was walking along Fourth avenue, wondering what the old gang in New York would think of me if they could see me ringing basement door-bells and getting the quick chase from kinky-headed hash-slingers, when I heard a sharp 'Ps-st!' coming from a doorway. The street was pretty well thronged—for St. Louis—but I looked around to see whence the sound proceeded. I saw a sharp-faced, grey-mustached, seedy-looking chap standing in the entrance to an office building and nodding me toward him. He had three swell little fox-terrier pups tied by three strings. I was apparently the man he wanted, for he grinned nervously as I walked over toward him.

"'I t'ought by your looks you might ha' b'en a lag,' was the polite way he addressed me, 'and w'en you answered th' signal I knowed it.'

"Perhaps some of you fellows don't know that the sharp 'Ps-st!' is the way convicts attract each others' attention.

"'You overwhelm me with your confidence, Sammy,' I started to say, 'but, at that, I think you've got your piping-off lamps a bit twisted and ——'

"'Stow that, pal,' he broke in. 'I ain't a six-year-old, and if you haven't done a few bits, by the looks of ye, I'm a smoker, which I ain't. Got no time t' chaw anyhow. Just take these pups for me. I just seen a fly sleut' from Pittsburg pass along, and I wouldn't be s'prised if he's nosin' for me. I done a job up that way a few weeks ago, and nearly all th' rest o' the gang's doin' their bits now. I ain't takin' chances, and I got t' drill. Just annex these pups—they're t'oroughbreds and th' real t'ing—and see wot ye can make outen 'em. You look like you need th' cush. So do I, but there's not enough room for me and that wise sleut' from Smokeburg in th' same town. So I'll just take a chase. Sell th' pups, and if ever I run acrost ye, you can make good if you've got it on ye. S'long.'

"And he was off, with the quickest shuffle, neither a run nor a walk, that I ever saw a man put up. In ten seconds he was mixed with the crowd, and I had three strings, each attached to a tugging little devil of a fox-terrier, in my right mitt. It was the suddenest game I had stacked up

against in a long while. For a minute after the crook had disappeared I didn't quite know whether to get hot or to laugh over his mistaking me for one of the lag tribe. When I reflected upon the rather bum front I was putting up, though, with a week's growth of beard on my face, and perhaps the hang-dog air which the highest stepping human proposition on earth will exhibit when he's down proper and up against it, I couldn't blame the crook, and I had to grin gloomily over his error. Meantime, there were those pups. I knew something about dogs, and I could see at a glance that they were perfectly bred English fox-terriers, thoroughbred all over, and valuable. Wherever the crook got hold of 'em, I pass. I at first concluded that I didn't want any part of a game like that, and was for hunting up the janitor of the office-building and handing the pups over to him. Then I had another think.

"'Passing 'em along to the janitor or anybody else for nothing,' I thought, 'would be liable to excite suspicion that I had swiped 'em, and get me pinched. And I'm not going to turn 'em loose; I wouldn't turn even a yaller dog loose in St. Loo to hustle for himself. And I need the money.'

"I knew a lot of horse owners and trainers over at the East St. Louis track. I guess there were

plenty of 'em who wouldn't have stood for my peddling patent lamp chimney cleaners if they'd known I was up against it that hard, but they didn't know it; I was never on the touch at any stage of the game, snow or hail. I took a calash, dumped my three pups into it, and told the driver to take me across to the paddock of the East St. Louis track. He wanted the price of the ride in advance, noticing my make-up out of the tail of his eye, but I hurled him a spiel about some collections I was going to make at the other end of the line, and it went. He took me over. It was then along toward noon, and I knew that I'd find a lot of horsemen I knew at the stables. There was one of 'em, a trainer for a big Memphis string—I'd known him when I was picking 'em right—standing at the main stable gate when my calash pulled up. I hopped out with my three pups.

"'Just give the driver two dollars for me for ten minutes, will you?' I said to the trainer, and he dug up with a lot of friendly talk about my apparently being on the porcine and all that. That made me quits with the driver. The driver hadn't pulled off before I saw that trainer eyeing my pups. If there is anything a old-time horseman loves more than a thoroughbred horse, it's a thoroughbred dog, and the horsemen's addiction to bull and fox-ter-

rier pups was something I was dead onto when I decided to cross over to East St. Louis with my bunch of little stump-tails. I didn't say anything, but watched one of the pups claw all over the trainer, who I knew was sizing the batch up with the eye of a man who knew dog and dog-breed from away back.

"'Those are foxes right,' he said, after opening the little chaps' mouths and picking them to pieces with his shrewd eyes. 'Where'd you get 'em?'

"'From a fellow I met,' said I, not caring to talk much about that end of it.

"'I'll give you fifty for this one,' he said, picking up the little gyp that had been clawing him.

"'You're on,' said I, coolly as I could, but the figure came near flattening me. The amount of my rake-off on 500 patent lamp chimney cleaners! I knew that the pups were good, but I had no idea they were as good as all that.

"My trainer friend pulled out a bundle about the size of the under side of a horse collar and dug beneath the hundreds to get at a fifty, which he handed me.

"'You're a good thing,' said he, when the transaction was completed, and he had the pup under his arm. 'This gyp's worth a century if she's worth two bits.'

"I told him that any money was money to me just then, and we started for the stables, I leading my other two pups. There was a bunch of owners, nearly all of whom I knew, standing outside one of the stables when we got up, and every man stopped talking just to size up those pups.

"'I've just chucked it into him,' said the Memphis trainer, nodding with a grin to me, and addressing the owners, 'by claiming this one for fifty. I'll make ten times that out of her with a few litters.'

"'I'll give you a fifty for this one,' said an owner from the coast to me.

"'Nothing doing,' said I.

"'Seventy-five,' said he.

"'Come again,' said I.

"'Post-time—a hundred,' said he.

"'Take him,' I said, and he tripped me a 'C' from his roll.

"'Other one's mine,' said two owners at once, —a Chicago and a Cincinnati man,—and they drew straws to see which had spoken first and which would have the privilege of paying a hundred for my last pup. The Chicago man won, and I had $250 in my clothes, that had started out in the morning with the idea of making enough out of my patent lamp chimney cleaners to buy

two dollars worth of railroad ride to any old point out of St. Louis.

"Well, the old fire to run that bundle up into a million by playing 'em right there that afternoon got into me, and I went off into a corner and reflected. I had the price to sail into New York with the bells on,—to break out of St. Loo once and forever,—and yet ——

"'Say, boy,' I heard a voice behind me saying. I looked around and saw the Memphis trainer who had bought the gyp. 'Seeing that I did you on that dog deal, and that you appear to have been some out of luck lately,—if you see me before the last race on the card this afternoon, maybe I'll be able to put you next to a little thing that's meant at a good price.'

"He shot me an expressive look out of his shrewd grey eyes, and walked away chewing a straw. Then he turned and came back.

"Don't monkey with any of the other races; they're all open; but see me about half an hour before the last one.'

"Then he walked away for good.

"I went back to St. Louis, got some duds out of hock, took a Turkish bath, and by three o'clock I was groomed up, with a Planters' meal beneath my weskit, a quarter cigar in my face, and on my way

over to East St. Louis in a cab. This was on Friday (my lucky day) May 3, 1895. I got to the track in time to watch the third and fourth races, there were only five on the card, and I watched 'em with cold feet and nary a dollar down. Then I slipped out to the paddock and looked around for my friend, the Memphis trainer. I found him chewing a straw and looking unconcerned.

"'I think there's something doing on this Oh No plug,' said he, giving me the right kind of a look out of his eyes. 'Finished last the last time out, and a bum looker, but—well, there may be something doing on Oh No. Don't take any of it now. The price'll go up.'

"I went out into the betting ring and saw that there were plenty of 15 to 1 against Oh No. There were practically three favorites in the race —Conductor McSweeney and Hercules at 5 to 2 against, and Oakview at 2 to 1, the latter played down from 3 to 1 by the time I got into the ring. Two minutes after I got into the ring there was a lot of heavy play on these three, and Oh No's price went a-soaring. When it got to 30 to 1 I took $100 worth of it in four books. I was just in time, for I hadn't any sooner got my $3,000 to $100 before a lot of educated money began to show

around the ring, and Oh No's price was cut first to 20, and then closed at 15 to 1.

"'They can't lose me anyhow, whether Oh No wins or not,' I reflected as I went into the stand, feeling pretty sassy with the hundred and a quarter that I still had left and knowing that I'd get back to New York on the varnished cars any old way.

"I thought my $100 was up in the air for a cinch when the bunch went to the post. Oh No looked to me like a Percheron short of work. Oh No, with a boy named Slaughter up, got off a rank last, twenty yards behind the bunch, with Conductor McSweeney 'way out in front, and Hercules and Oakview, the other two played horses, lapped on each other for the place. Around the back stretch the Slaughter boy began to hunch Oh No up a little, and, turning into the stretch, the plug was fifth in the field of eight, only five lengths behind the leader. Then the Slaughter boy let the mutt down, there was a ding-dong drive all the length of the stretch, and Oh No's nose poked in front right on the wire, Conductor McSweeney a neck away, and Hercules ahead of Oakview by a neck.

"When I had collected my $3,100—two of the bookies who'd laid against me and another man on the Oh No proposition weren't on the block any more that year—I went a-hunting for the

Memphis trainer. When I found him I offered him a thousand of my roll.

"'Salt that,' said he. 'I don't need it. I yank down $6,000 on that good one myself from four or five different rooms around the country.'

"There's nothing too good for the pair of fox-terriers I've got on my place now," concluded Ex-Tank No. 19.

TALE THE ELEVENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 25 Elucidateth Ye Theory That a Man is Never Broke Until He is Broke

TALE THE ELEVENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 25 ELUCIDATETH YE THEORY THAT A MAN IS NEVER BROKE UNTIL HE IS BROKE

"A MAN'S never broke until he's broke. Also, all sheep herders are surely crazy," said Ex-Tank No. 25, who used to run a newspaper at Buffalo, Wyo., taking two long draws at his cigar and gazing around him blandly.

"No, siree," he continued, "no man's ever broke until he's flat cleaned out and busted down to the last piece of metal with the United States stamp on it. And although there's not a particle of doubt that Joe Irish was, and probably is yet, the craziest sheep herder that ever threw a rock at a Snake River magpie, that don't say that all sheep herders aren't more or less loony. Now, after the chance Joe Irish had to quit a big winner that time, of course, like the crazy sheep herder he was, he wasn't satisfied, but he wanted to put all the layouts out of business, and of course he went broke down to his last two bits. And if, after getting

down to the last two bits, he hopped in again and fooled me up by quitting a bigger winner than he had been before, why, that didn't prove that he wasn't plump blind, staggering crazy, not by a dickens of a lot, did it?

"Joe, you know," went on Ex-Tank No. 25, "couldn't spend his pay on the range, and so, when he came into Pocatello (which is in Idaho, as I suppose I must say for the benefit of the Uitlanders by whom I am surrounded), he had $300 waiting for him. That $300 bundle was an awful affliction to Joe. He knew that he couldn't hope to blow it all in on sage-brush whiskey within the space of ten days, which was to be the period of his knock-off after nine solid months on the range —but he made the attempt. After three days of it he still had $250 left. Now, whiskey and inborn insanity naturally make toward melancholia. I was up against it at Pocatello, but I had a front. That is, I had a collar and necktie. That's probably why Joe Irish picked me out for somebody when he saw me standing near the entrance to the Grand Palace bar and asked me. We had two or three, and then Joe unfolded to me his tale of woe. Only six and a half days remaining of his vacation from the sheep range and about $250 left.

"'An' th' best I kin do,' said Joe, 'is t' drink

three gallons o' booze a day, an' there ain't no one around here to stan' me up an' take th' bundle off me, or work th' shells on me, or do me out o' th' wad. Podner,' wound up Joe, plaintively, 'I'm afeared I'm a-goin' t' hev fully twelve dollars left out o' this bunch when th' time comes fur me t' hit up th' range agin.'

"I really felt sorry for Joe, and so suggested Shag Shaughnessy. You see, when I struck Pocatello I had gone against Shag Shaughnessy's layout myself. My ticket ran out at Pocatello, and I only had eight dollars left. I wanted to go to some old place, either backward or forward, and eight dollars wasn't much. Shag got the eight dollars. That's why I was anchored at Pocatello.

"I had practically to lift Joe into Shag's, for the mesquite whiskey had told on him already on this fourth morning of his vacation from the range, although he hadn't taken more than eighty-seven drinks of it since he had got out of bed at nine o'clock in the morning. I lifted him into Shag's from purely philanthropic motives. I didn't purpose permitting any poor sheep herder to go back to his range with money if I could help it. And Shag looked pleased when I brought Joe in. Shag was dealing himself, and the four men in front of the table were pikers.

"'Here's a poor man,' said I to Shag, 'that's got to go to work on his range next week, and he don't see his way clear to getting rid of his pile between now and then unless he has assistance. I can't help him any, because myself, I'm only waiting here to be vagged. Fix him out, Shag, and earn his eternal gratitude.'

"'Podner,' said Joe to me, gratefully, 'you're all right. Much obliged.'

"Then Joe fell into one of the side seats just when Shag was starting a new boxful, and by the time the box was out Joe had won $1,850 of Shag's coin just by letting his money stand eight times on the winners because he had no more sense, between his natural craziness and the whiskey. Joe plunked his first hunk of gilt, twenty dollars, on a queen. It came out. Then he slapped the winning and the original twenty dollars over on an eight. It came out. And so on. Eight times he did this. The box was kind to him every time. After the eighth come-out, when, besides his original twenty dollars, $1,850 worth of Shag's chips were piled up on the jack, the eighth card, Joe suddenly came to, like a man who had been hypnotized. It was a durned uncomfortable lucid interval for Shag.

"'Podner,' said Joe, addressing me, 'I'm jest a

bit dizzy. We'll git out in the air an' whirl aroun' some. Jest cash in this bunch fur me, will you?'

"Shag looked very much disappointed. In fact, I've rarely seen such a disappointed-looking man as Shag was when he turned that $1,850 worth of chips into gold and currency.

"'Are you going to bring him back?' Shag asked me.

"'My boy,' said I to Shag, 'I'm waiting to get vagged here, but I am not yet a runner for your institution. From motives of the purest philanthrophy I brought our sheep-herding son of fortune here, to assuage his premature grief at the prospect of being compelled to return to his range with negotiable paper and metal. The task seems to have been too difficult, but it lets me out. For the future movements of Mr. Irish'—Joe had already gone out of the front door—'I am not responsible.'

"Shaughnessy cashed the chips, and I walked out with the $1,870, which included Joe's original venture of twenty dollars, and, nailing the wandering Joe about a block up the street, I handed it out to him. You may be surprised that he trusted me, a stranger, so completely, but then you are measurably familiar with my winning ways.

"Joe didn't seem to be particularly pleased with the amount of his winnings.

"'It's one thing or th' other, podner, with me,' said he. 'Either I go back to th' range broke, or I go a-travellin', an' I keep on a-travellin' until I'm broke. It looks as if I don't get broke here. So, how about a-travellin', an' right now?'

"I related unto the crazy man several tales of quite sensible persons who hadn't ever been able to let well enough alone, and I told him he'd better hang on to his winnings and take a brace.

"'Brace nothin',' he replied. 'I'm braced, huddlin' a ornery bunch o' sheep ten months in th' year, an' I'm just unbracin' now an' lettin' out. When's th' nex' train west comin' along?'

"The next Union Pacific train for the west was about due then, and I told him so.

"'Well, we'll jest take it,' said Joe.

"It was humiliating, but I was compelled to tell him my circumstances. I tried to point a moral in telling him about my circumstances, but he wasn't up to moralizing just then. He dug into the pocket wherein he had deposited his winnings, drew out a handful of gold and notes, and as I placed both of my hands behind my back deprecatingly he put it all on the rim of my hat.

"'I'm stakin' you,' he said. 'Don't be a coyote.'

"I reached for the money then and counted it. It amounted to $235.

"'As a loan, then,' said I, 'all right,' for I reflected that if we were to go travelling a stake would be necessary, very likely, before long.

"We went over to the Grand Palace four-room hotel anb I paid up and got my grip. Joe had entered Pocatello unincumbered with luggage and my solicitude over mine bored him a good deal. When the Union Pacific train for the west came along we took palace-car seats for the length of the division. I thought that 'ud be far enough to sober Joe up. The end of the division was Glenn's Ferry, Idaho. When we got there—and neither of us suffered for nourishment on the way—it was about eleven o'clock at night. I put up across from the station, at a hotel kept by a locomotive engineer's wife. I intended to get Joe to bed there, lock him up, and, when he was measurably sober the next morning, beat sense into his head. The plan didn't go through. Joe was just sober enough before I got him to bed to be contrary. He had seen a wide-open game on his way to the hotel. He wanted some of it. I had to go along with him.

"Joe didn't have a nickel in the world when we left that game at two o'clock in the morning. I had about $220, but Joe had forgotten all about that, and I didn't intend to tell him anything about it

until some of the corners of his jag had been effaced. We turned in and slept like a pair of tops. When we woke up the next morning Joe didn't exhibit the customary gloom made and provided for the broke man with the big head. He was quite chipper and cheerful.

"'I guess I kin stand in with one o' th' brakies t' git a ride back t' my range,' said he. 'What's more, I've had my money's worth. We'll stand 'em up fur breakfast here, hey?'

"I nodded. As we were entering the eating room of the hotel shack, Joe kicked something metallic with the toe of his boot, and the metallic thing went clinking around the room until it hit the wall. Joe followed it and picked it up. It was a quarter. There was a far deeper expression of pleasure on his face when he picked up that quarter than there had been during any part of the time when he was slugging Shag Shaughnessy's faro layout.

"'I ain't broke yit,' said Joe, stuffing the quarter into his pocket.

"After we had breakfast we went out for a walk around. I pretended to have found a stray dollar in my vest pocket, and I asked Joe into a weather-boarded saloon for a drink. In the back room of the saloon there was a roulette wheel and a red and black table, both of them already in operation for

the benefit of the railroad men who were soon to go out on their trains. The quarter in Joe's pocket itched. He played the 00 on the wheel layout. It won. Then he did another amateurish thing. He played the 33. It won. Joe was crazy, as I say, and therefore a bet doubler from away back. He doubled on the wheel, and losing only nine times in twenty-seven plays, and just keeping under the twenty dollar limit—the game ranged from a quarter to that figure—he had $268 when I plucked him by the sleeve. He was sensible enough to quit the wheel at my whispered suggestion. But when we got outside:

"'We'll now head for the main tent,' said Joe. I tried to convince him that $268 was a pretty fair wad of money for a man who had been flat broke, all except a quarter, half an hour before, and I put it to him, too, that he could now go back to Pocatello and finish out his five days' leave yet remaining.

"'We'll now head for the main tent,' repeated Joe, and there was nothing for it but to accompany him to Glenn's Ferry's chief faro layout.

"Joe took seven drinks of whiskey and started play. He got down to his last ten dollar gold bit, and I was just about to dig up my hold-out pile and begin play myself, when he played the high

card with his ten dollars and won. He couldn't lose from that moment. At three o'clock in the afternoon, when the east-bound express from Portland was due, Joe was $2,225 winner. I tugged at him and invited him to the station to see me off.

"'Where you goin'?' he asked me.

"'East. To Omaha,' I told him.

"He cashed in and handed me five $100 bills.

"'You kin return that, if you're squeamish about it, when you git back where you b'long.'

"I smiled in Joe's teeth and produced the $219 that I had left.

"'I am already your beneficiary to this extent,' I said to him, 'and if you insist on it I'll hang on to this, although I meant to return it to you when you took a brace, and be much obliged into the bargain.'

"He studied me for a moment.

"'Well, podner,' he said, finally, 'if a tenderfoot like you kin come out t' this country an' hold such a level head on his shoulders there ain't no reason that I kin see why I shouldn't profit by th' example, so t' speak. I'll just hold out on myself and carry this whole bunch with me back t' th' range.'

"He took the east-bound train with me, and got off with about $2,100 in his pocket when we

reached the station nearest his range. All of which is why I wasn't vagged at Pocatello. All of which also goes to show that a man's never broke until he's broke."

"But how about all sheep herders being crazy?" inquired Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker.

"Didn't Joe Irish let me, a broke and about-to-be-vagged tenderfoot from the East, handle his winnings?" said Ex-Tank No. 25.

TALE THE TWELFTH

Containing a Report of Ex-Tank No. 14 in the Distressing Position of Ye Stowaway

TALE THE TWELFTH

CONTAINING A REPORT OF EX-TANK NO. 14 IN THE DISTRESSING POSITION OF YE STOWAWAY

"I FIND it odd to reflect," said Ex-Tank No. 14, "that I made a cruise on the Olympia, Admiral George Dewey's flagship, before Dewey ever trod her decks; and I wasn't in the navy, either."

No. 14 immediately found himself the object of the suspicious gaze of the whole club. No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, punctured the moment of silence that followed.

"Come at us light," said No. 7. "You were shovelling coal on her trial trip. Is that it?"

"Nope," answered Ex-Tank No. 14. "I had a good long sail on board the Olympia after she went into commission. Wasn't connected with the service, though, as I said."

Ex-Tank No. 7 grew visibly angry, but the Chief Ex-Tank had his eye on him and he only spluttered: "You of course availed yourself, then, of an opportunity to ride on the Olympia when she was a collier or a tank ship or engaged in creek

ferrying, eh? Say, d'ye think you can throw it into this outfit that the Olympia, one of the finest cruisers in the world, was ever a passenger boat?"

There was plenty of sarcasm in the inquiry, but No. 14 preserved his calm amiability.

"There's no question about the Olympia's being a beauty and a crackajack," he went on reflectively. "Roomy, too. Plenty of room aboard of her for a fellow to keep out of sight. I was the Olympia's first stowaway."

"Oh, you stowed away?" inquired No. 7 with a dreary smile of incredulity. "That sounds so dead easy, you know—to stow away on an American man-o'-war. Say, did you ever stow away on a transpacific airship?"

"You see, it's a pretty long and monotonous walk from San Diego to San Francisco, and my lips were chapped, anyhow, so that I didn't want to walk," went on Ex-Tank No. 14. "I was run down some, too, and needed a lungful or two of sea air, and a trip on a new cruiser was good enough for me, especially when it 'ud take me back to where I wanted to go. That's how I happened to stow away on the Olympia in the month of March, 1895, on her return trip from the first baby cruise she went on after going into commission."

"Didn't have a bit of difficulty doing it, either, did you?" inquired No. 7 sarcastically. "All you had to do was to walk over the side, head for the Captain's cabin and bunk up with the old man, eh? Say, what kind o' people d'ye think you're ——"

"Back up, Seven," commanded the Chief Ex-Tank, pounding with his cane gavel. "Make way for the deep-water, heavy-weather man."

"I surely did winter hard in San Francisco that year," resumed No. 14. "I had got together a staff of steam-beer pugs—three of them—in the fall, expectin' 'em to win me out enough to get back to New York with bells a-jingling, anyhow. But they all three went wrong. One of 'em stabbed a friend of his and got three years in San Quentin. Another went off on a toot after I had shaped him up for a ten-round go with a welter-weight and landed in the bug ward of a free hospital with the jims. The last of the bunch got himself poked out in the first round by a half Modoc lightweight, and I passed him up. Didn't pull down a dollar from one of them. Then I got behind the curtain out at the track and found out about a good thing that was in preparation. I put a Willie boy that I met next to what was going to happen, and it went through, my rakedown being

$800. I was in two minds about jumping back to New York right then, but I concluded to have one more whack at the ring on an air-tight good thing that I'd heard about. I put the whole bundle, down to the last two-bit piece, on it. The nag got away ten lengths behind the bunch and was beaten a nose on the wire, with 30 to 1 about him. I'd played him straight only. That put me out of business for fair.

"I got through the next couple o' months on my wardrobe and my face, but it was hard plugging, San Francisco being the worst ever in ladling out the frappé to the busted also-rans. Only had one suit, the trousers unpressed, and nary the price to get my collars and cuffs out, when I met up with the merry-go-round chap. He was running the merry-go-round on a lot out near the Presidio, and making good, too. San Francisco people will take a hack at anything that gives 'em a whirl and he was pulling down pretty fair money on this merry-go-round. His name was Joe Casdale and he was a queer duck, with all kinds of tattoo marks on his arms and chest and enough information about the South Seas to make a book. He never coughed up anything about himself, however. He took me in with him to help him stand watch on the merry-go-round for two dollars a day

and a roost at his boarding-house. I stayed along at that until the business began to flatten out, and then Casdale asked me if I wanted to go down to San Diego with him and the merry-go-round to take in the March flower fiesta. I went.

"Now, I'd been doing a dry stunt ever since I first went broke in San Francisco, which was nine months before, and this San Diego flower fiesta just naturally made me thirsty. A California flower fiesta is one of these here delightful Latin-European institutions that permit, and in fact require, all hands to corn up from the beginning to the end of them. There's no side stepping on the proposition that those people out there know how to enjoy themselves, and the way they cut loose for the annual flower fiesta is a warning to locusts. This San Diego blow-out lasted just one week, and there was simply nothing doing except joy from the start to the finish of it. It was, in fact, about the most colossal drunk I'd ever blown into. It didn't take me off my feet the first day or two, but after that I began nibbling at the red Chianti of California just to get into the game. I found it pretty hard to keep at my stunt on the merry-go-round, which was coining money, after I got started on the California cochineal, and on the fourth afternoon I had just walked off for an hour or

so and let Casdale run the fit-out himself. When I got back, pretty well hooted up, along toward five o'clock in the afternoon, I found the merry-go-round with a big sign on it, 'Closed down,' and a cop standing near told me that my boss was in jail. I hustled up to the jail to see him, and found him smoking a pipe as cool as a cucumber.

"'It's all off,' he told me. 'They've nabbed me for a job of ship-swiping five years ago, they've got me dead to rights, and I'll do my little three or five trick over the road for it for a certainty. I don't know whether they'll attach the merry-go-round or not, but if they don't you can have it and run it yourself. You needn't bother about any lawyer. They've got me too pat for that.'

"Well, there was a queer story in connection with that. Five years before that Casdale, with a couple of other chance-taking sailors—the masters' certificates of all three of them had been taken away from them years before for crooked work—had deliberately sailed a schooner belonging to a shipping company out of the harbor of Santa Barbara and put out to sea, bound for that queer island, Tiburon. They had heard pipe stories about buccaneers' treasure being buried there, and they went after it. The natives didn't let them get within a hundred yards of the beach, and they had set sail

for Acapulco in their swiped schooner. The boat got into a gale and was waterlogged and the three chaps were picked up by the Pacific mail steamer Colima, that went down a few years ago with all hands. Casdale had been spotted in San Diego at his merry-go-round by one of the agents of the Santa Barbara shipping company during my absence that afternoon, and here they had him behind the bars. He told me all this briefly over his pipe, made me out a bill of sale for the merry-go-round, shook hands and told me that he wanted to take a snooze, and that's the last I ever saw of him. I heard afterward that he got what he expected—five years.

"I took a brace and went back and opened up the merry-go-round again. Took in nearly forty dollars that night and was booming along toward the hundred mark the next day when a deputy sheriff came along and attached the whole works. Now, at the moment when this deputy sheriff duck served this attachment on me I was riding about thirty of the sailors of the Olympia, which had gone into commission up at the Mare Island Navy Yard the month before and had been sent on her first run down to the San Diego flower fiesta to sort o' loosen up the machinery and get her oiled up. I'd been running in with the bluejackets every day

since the beginning of the blowout and they knew me. Got mixed up with several bunches of 'em, when I started in on the Chianti of the soil, in fact. When this deputy sheriff flashed his paper on me, therefore, and I told my bunch of tars that it was all off, that the outfit had been grabbed from me, they asked me whether I wanted to stand for it or not. They were all loaded for snowbirds and they didn't see any particular reason why their merry-go-round rides should be choked off in that sudden way. If I'd given them the tip there'd have been minced deputy sheriff on the bill of fare in less than two minutes, but I was just about enough on top of the old stuff to know that if the bluejackets took it into their heads to rough-house it with the representative of the law they'd get themselves into pretty serious trouble, and so I called 'em off.

"'I'm too strong to run the thing now, anyhow,' I told 'em, 'and I want to do some riding on merry-go-rounds myself.'

"The talk I put up seemed to make a hit with them, and away we went to help make the fiesta festive. I had enough on me then to take me back to New York, but I passed up the opportunity again.

"'New York,' said I to myself, 'is a pretty raw

burg in the month of March and the Chianti that costs sixteen cents a gallon here is about $1.98, or something like that, over there.'

"I don't remember much about the finish of that night, or the next, or any of 'em for the rest of the week. I had a bodyguard of bluejackets, I know, all the time, and while my hundred held out their shore money was counterfeit. I must have been thicker than thieves with 'em, though, for when I woke up on the Sunday morning following the final Saturday night finish of the fiesta a couple of them, with petty officers' badges on their arms, were prodding me in the ribs.

"'Say,' said one of them, a big oiler who had been all over the world, in the navy, as I afterward found out, 'we've got to go aboard now to stand Sunday inspection. Liberty's up. You were giving us a hop-talk last night about walking back to 'Frisco. Is it up to you to do that?'

"I got up, looked through my clothes, found a single two-bit piece, held it up, and, said I: 'It looks like it, don't it?'

"'Well, I'll tell you,' said this kindly giant. 'You've been on the level with us fellows, and we want to handle you right. It's a long way by the footpath up to San Francisco. D'ye want to take a chance and ride up on the ship?'

"'What ship?' said I.

"'Our ship, the Olympia,' said he. 'There's been about forty or fifty of the junipers that shipped in Mare Island as landsmen and coal heavers jumped her down here—couldn't stand the gaff. None of them was aboard long enough to have his mug known to the officers. I've got the rig of one of the coal heavers that quit along with me. Jump into it, if you want to go up—the ship sails to-morrow morning—and the black gang down below 'll see, after you get aboard, that you don't have to stand a coal-heaving watch for your passage, that you get your mess pan, and that the Jimmy Legs and none of the officers 'll get next. That's better than walking, isn't it?'

"Was it? I was in that coal-heaver's bluejacket rig, big head and all, in less than three minutes, and my name was switched to John Crimmins, the name of the deserter the oiler told me I looked most like. I rolled down to the steam cutter with three of my bluejacket pals of the week, and when we got to the landing we found about twenty more of them, in various stages of that next morning feeling, waiting to go off to the ship. We all climbed into the cutter, and on the way over the oiler whispered me some directions.

"'All you've got to do when you go aboard,' said he, 'is to line up with the rest of the gang, and when John Crimmins's name is sung out by the officer of the deck, you just give him a bit of a salute with your right, say, "Here, sir," and he'll look you over to see whether you're to be marked in the book "drunk and dirty" or "clean and sober." The officer of the deck to-day is a kid junior lieutenant that don't know one man's mug from another's, and when you sing out your name walk forward to the break o' the fo'c'sle an' I'll be right behind you. Another thing: There's not much chance of the thing not going through, but if you're nailed they can't do any more than put you on the beach. If you're nailed and questioned, just tell 'em that you came aboard on your own hook, and don't cough up who put you next to this scheme.'

"It went through like clock work. I shinned up the gangway ladder with as ready-money a swing as if I had been born in the foretop of a wind jammer, for this free ride up to San Francisco looked pretty neat to me, and I was play-acting on my mettle. The young fellow in officer's clothes who called out the names of the returning liberty party just gave each of us a glance. A couple of the tars who were jagged to the point of spiflication

he handed over to the Master-at-Arms, who took me in, by the way, when he first clapped his lamps on me as if he thought there was a cog gone wrong somewhere in his head, but let it go at that. When I had answered to John Crimmins's name I didn't waste any time joining the bunch up forward. The oiler was right behind me.

"'Duck,' said he, without looking at me, 'I think the Jimmy Legs is next.' That is to say, he thought the Master-at-Arms had piped me off. Well, if the Master-at-Arms did have any suspicion beneath his cap, he was all right, anyhow. He gave me the queer look out of the tail of his eye a number of times after that, but if he had the thing right he never opened up. I went down to the engine room with my friend the oiler, and he spent half an hour or so in telling me what I was to do. I stood quarters and inspection that Sunday morning on the main deck under the name of John Crimmins, a lot of the tars of the black gang, who had been put on quietly by the oiler, huddling me in the rear lines so as to keep the engineers' eyes off me—not, the oiler said, that the engineers were liable to pipe me off, the crew was so new to them, but for safety.

"Well, after that Sunday morning it was easy. I got Crimmins's seat at the coal heavers' mess. I

was told off for a watch when the ship got under way for San Francisco the next morning, but my friends in the black gang wouldn't stand for my going into the bunkers.

"'It'll blister those soft mitts of yours,' they said, and I didn't pass any coal. The watch list was monkeyed with to get me out of it, and I mixed up with the gang forward while I was supposed to be stripped to the waist down below in a temperature of about 135° shovelling steam coal. I didn't want this end of it—it looked like flunking and playing the baby act to me—but the oiler told me that I'd croak in the bunkers and that 'ud give the whole snap away. I can't pass up any finer tribute to the decency of the fellows that are piking around the world in the American bluejacket uniform than to say this: I found out afterward that there wasn't a single man forward of the Olympia's crew that didn't know within twenty-four hours after I was aboard the Olympia that I was smuggled, and nary a one o' them so much as whispered their knowledge of it to me, much less chawed about it among themselves. The phrase 'there's a knocker in every push,' don't fit our man-o'-war's men.

"I had a nice sail, and when the ship pulled up at Mare Island I got shore liberty, went over to

Vallejo and forgot to come back. Therefore John Crimmins wasn't declared a deserter in San Diego, but in Vallejo, and that's one thing that John Crimmins doesn't know.

"Four months later I came across the mountains to New York in a four-and-a-half-day palace car, but that's another end of it.

"I never figured that the Olympia would fall in with such swell company as she did when George Dewey took his post on her bridge: but I had a ride on her before George did."

TALE THE THIRTEENTH

Which Speaketh of How Ex-Tank (Hoodoo) No. 13 Wickedly Represented Himself as Ye Theological Student

TALE THE THIRTEENTH

WHICH SPEAKETH OF HOW EX-TANK (HOODOO) NO. 13 WICKEDLY REPRESENTED HIMSELF AS YE THEOLOGICAL STUDENT

Ex-Tank (Hoodoo) No. 13 of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates went down to Washington to see Congress in the act of legislating.

"It made me lonesome," said he in talking about it after the regular order at the club had been concluded on his return. "Not that I hankered to be down on the floor in the middle of the bunch. It wasn't that. But it made me think of the term I put in when I was twenty-three in the lower house of Neb——"

"No boy oratory goes in this outfit. I want Hoodoo Thirteen to understand that," said Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, rising suddenly. "No narration which shall have for its purpose an attempt to stampede this organization in favor of any or all of the inhabitants of the State of Neb——"

"Number Seven will sit down and stay sat

down," commanded the Chief Ex-Tank, using the crook of his cane for a gavel. "This outfit is incapable of being stampeded. Each and every member of this organization has been so often stampeded himself to a proper finish that—er—Hoodoo Thirteen may resume."

"Well, I wasn't going to make any stab at throwing political raw meat into this cage of ours," said No. 13. "Politics don't bother me any more. Politics don't force me to take bromides and other dope to get sleep any more. What politics did to me that time when, at twenty-three, I was a member of the lower house of Neb—well, what politics did to me was a heap. Say, just one month after my stretch as a legislator was out I found myself standing up to the waist in the water of a Colorado mine, fooling with a drill for wages. That's what politics, aided and abetted by the stuff that flows and finally throws and that made the organization of this club possible—that's what politics, etc., did for me.

"But it gave me some nerve. Before I did that legislative stunt I could no more turn a win-out trick than a duck who's got a governor to telegraph to for funds when he has slung down his last card. After that, though—well, I had a rope around my neck once and it didn't chuck any par-

ticular scare into me. Probably I considered that a man might as well be hanged as live around the Red River district of Arkansas any longer.

"That was a queer game. After the Colorado mining job had held me waist deep in the water for a couple o' months, I keeled over with the tizzy-wizzy or something, went off my head for two or three weeks, and the boys were fixing to send me back home with a proper escort and me in the baggage car in a box. I fooled 'em on that, but the mining people wouldn't give me my job back when I was able to get on my feet—said they didn't think I could stand the gaff, and they didn't want to be held liable for damages if I croaked from the gas in the pit. So I jabbed a penknife into a map after closing my eyes, and the point of the blade stuck in the Red River country of Arkansas. I set sail for there, took the wildest end of it I could find and for a couple of weeks poked around on the banks of the river with a shotgun over my arm, making myself believe that I was hunting. Well, just to bite this end of it off short, the moonshiners down there got on to my trail and they figured me out as a revenue sharp. They held me up one day and run me to their still.

"'You've been hunting for something or other around here for a couple o' weeks,' they said to me

'and here it is,' and they showed me the still. I told 'em they were mixed. Now it happened that at the time they gathered me in I didn't have a charge in either barrel of my shotgun; was afraid of the triggers catching in the underbrush. This made them suspicious.

"'Hunting squirrels,' they said incredulously, 'and nary a charge in your iron? What are you giving us?'

"Well, I wasn't exactly feeling good or trig yet after that sickness, and so I told them to go to the devil if they didn't believe me; that I didn't have any time or inclination to chew the rag about it. So they put the rope around my neck, lifted me up to the top of a barrel and I spent the time in thinking out new ones to call them. That's what made the hit with them.

"'Revenue sharps don't talk that a-way,' the boss of the gang said just as I was about to have the barrel kicked from beneath me. 'I reckon he un's all right.' And so I was turned loose and told that Little Rock was healthier than any place along the banks of the Red River. I took the hint and that's how I happened to hit Little Rock.

"Now, when I got into Little Rock one October morning for the first time, the sun was shining, the town looked about as dinky as usual and I had

along with me eighty-five dollars and the whole wardrobe with which I had dazzled 'em when I was serving my term in the Legislature in the State of Neb—when I was in politics. This all seemed so unnatural that I took a few then and there before breakfast to sort o' bind the bargain. Then I forgot to eat any breakfast. I forgot to eat any breakfast for about three weeks after that. Now, any man who can stand Little Rock red stuff without eating anything for two days, much less two weeks, has got to have had a whole big future behind him at that kind of work, or it'll stop him for good and all. I was almost stopped at the wind-up of the three weeks. Also I was almost broke. I woke up one morning in my room at the Merchants' Exchange Hotel, and there was a pretty good looker of a duck sitting in the chair by the window reading the morning paper and smoking a pipe. I only remembered him vaguely, and so I asked him wherefore and how. Well, it seems that he had been my bosom pal and chum during those three weeks—that he had run into me almost from the go-off and that we had just burnt up Little Rock on that eighty-five dollars of mine and a bunch of forty dollars that he had become possessed of somehow or another himself. He, however, had snapped himself right about a week before, and

was, when I thus made his acquaintance rationally, feeling like a four-time winner, while I saw charts of the ichthyosaurian period all over the room. He sat around my room for a couple o' days, getting me right, and then we had a talk.

"'You're broke, ain't you?' said he to me.

"'Yep,' said I.

"'So'm I,' said he. 'So we'll have to hitch up, and do something. That right?'

"I told him that was about right, and I soon discovered that he had a whole lot of a head on him. He'd been every old thing—feather renovator, lawyer, book agent, lobbyist. He had an idea.

"'Say,' he said to me, 'while I've been sitting here listening to you talk bug in your sleep, it's struck me that you're all right as a reader. You didn't hurl any "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night" or stuff like that at me, but you worked off a lot of Mark Twain and Jim Whit Riley and Eugene Field spiels when you didn't know it, and I guess you must have had some amateur practice somewhere at that game. How about it?'

"I told him he was about right, and then he sprung his graft.

"'I guess I'll just start out ahead of you and bill a few towns announcing you as a reader. I'll work up the church end of it. You can give your read-

ings in the churches, see, and I'll spread it around that you're a young, brilliant and promising theological student, endeavoring to raise funds by reading sufficient to enable you to complete your studies. We won't make any charge for admission, but when we've got 'em planted in the churches we'll pass around the plate and I guess we'll get enough out of it that way for a meal ticket or so. How about it?'

"I told him to go ahead and he did. He had a pretty good front, and altogether he was about as hustling a pal to tandem up with as ever I met. I don't know how he ever got the price of a ticket down to Arkadelphia, but he got there and hired a church for my first reading. Then he spread himself around among the population and threw it into 'em what a great man was going to appear 'in their midst' to read things to them. I got a telegram from him two days after he struck Arkadelphia. It read:

"'Put one of those overcoats in for five dollars and come down here at once.'

"I followed copy and landed in Arkadelphia that same night, wearing my legislative black broadcloth suit, a silk lid ruffled up to make it look like the toppers of theological students ought to look when they're struggling for a chance to pursue

their studies, and a pair of plain glass eyeglasses that I got for thirty-five cents to throw studiousness into my make-up.

"'You're good all right, outside,' said my pal, when he met me at the Arkadelphia station, sizing me up, 'but you won't do. You're up against it. I made a mistake this morning, and it's queered the dice, I'm afraid. Called on the old Presbyterian minister here—one of 'em, for I believe there are two—and tried to enlist him in the game and succeeded. That's the dickens of it. I succeeded. He wants to see you as soon as you get in. Now, he's sharper than a steel trap, and he's got an eye like an eagle. He's one of the shrewdest old gentlemen I ever met and he's bound to get next. He'll want to talk theology with you, and he'll run you into a corner before you've been alongside of him two minutes. And the minute he sees there's anything phony about you, the reading business, lacking toeweights, goes right up in the air. I'm afraid it's all up, chum. He'll expect you to talk Greek and Latin, and when you flunk on that he'll wonder ——'

"'You go on talking just to hear your head roar, don't you, pal?' I said to him. 'How do you know I'll flunk? What'll you bet I'll flunk? You say he's an old one? Well, d'ye suppose he

remembers a hundred lines of his Iliad? I do, and I'll saw 'em off on him if he gives me half a show. D'ye think he recalls one canto of his Virgil? Well, it has only been three years or so since I broke away from all that and I can heave Virgil at him till he can't rest. And I'll fight shy of theology. Just take me to him, and if I don't win out I'll let you go through my trunk and take what you want.'

"My pal took me to the old minister rather reluctantly, and then left me, ostensibly to attend to some business, but really because he didn't want to be on hand to see me go all to pieces in the old gentleman's hands.

"Did the old minister tear me apart? Not much did he! Say, I'm not so chesty now as I used to be, and whatever big head I ever had has been swatted out of me, but I certainly did just dazzle that old clergyman. I laid myself out. I knew I was talking for my life, for if that reading proposition didn't go through I didn't see anything ahead except selling patent egg beaters. I made it stick. We talked far into the night, and when I left the old man he was giving me the gentle pats on the shoulder. He was really one of the strongest men I ever met—a bushy eyebrowed old man of the cloth, with a pair of keen eyes and a faculty

for seeing into things. Yet, as I say, when I bade him good-bye that night he was on my staff all right, and he told me that he'd do all in his power to make the reading a success.

"When I met my manager and told him about it he did a Moqui snake dance, and the next morning there was an announcement in the Arkadelphia morning paper near the top of the first column, announcing that '—— ———, the famous reader and entertainer, whose successful efforts in this line are well known throughout the State of Arkansas, will amuse and instruct the people of Arkadelphia at the —— Church this evening, under the auspices of the Rev. —— ——— and other Arkadelphian men of the cloth.'

"The reading went through with a rush. The whole town turned out to take it in. Both my pal and I were flat broke on that morning and I had had to wash out a white string tie myself in my room and iron it with a heated shoe horn to wear at the reading. After I had read my first two numbers that night my pal saw that the plates went around, and he counted the dust. The 800 and odd people in the church chipped in a flat $194 and no buttons, and they gave me a hand that you could have heard a block away, at that, for every number. The clergymen and elders sat upon the platform

and I couldn't help but think to myself as I stood up there, thus hedged in by piety and black clothes, 'Say, if my poor old pious mother could just see me now!'

"We did eleven other towns in central and southwest Arkansas, but the thirteenth place we struck saw the finish of the tour. That place was Malvern, a little town on the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad. We had about $1,500 between us when we struck Malvern, and maybe we both had the idea by that time that we had too much money without getting a very swift run for it. Anyhow, my pal didn't work up the Malvern community very hard. I noticed his rather unusual lack of energy and asked him about it.

"'Well,' said he, 'I've been trying to make up my mind ever since I got awake this morning whether I want to begin on just a quart or a magnum of wine. That's a nice calculation and I haven't figured it out to my entire satisfaction yet. But it's going to be one or the other before the sun goes down. Then I noticed when I read the results this morning that a horse won down at New Orleans at sixty to one that I'd have played if I'd have had to spout my shoes for a dollar. This caused me to reflect that I may be wasting my time

—that I ought to be on the ground where they're running. Finally, I've observed in the course of the last three readings that your voice is becoming slightly impaired—probably on account of unnatural drought. What you going to have?'

"It was all off from that moment of course. We split the $1,500 right there, so there'd be no growl later on, and I went and purchased some very untheological garments. Then we had magnums on the boat all the way down to New Orleans. My pal batted the books so hard down there that he went out to San Francisco to finish out his string there. I preferred to remain in New Orleans. I did remain there. Two months after I got there I was peddling 'Picturesque Turkestan,' in 112 numbers, fifty cents a number, to the population of New Orleans, and not getting rich at it."

TALE THE FOURTEENTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 6 Sheweth Up the Vanity of Ye Sturdy Pioneers of the Northwest

TALE THE FOURTEENTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 6 SHEWETH UP THE VANITY OF YE STURDY PIONEERS OF THE NORTHWEST

"Now, Portland, Ore., isn't what you'd call by rights a nice, soft town in which to go broke," said Ex-Tank No. 6, thoughtfully polishing the stone of his four-karat, blue-white diamond ring with his pocket handkerchief. "Portland isn't frosty, but it's wet. It rains thirteen months in the year out there, and the gloom of the burg is pervasive and pronounced. You get no sparkling sunshine and blue skies in Portland to throw momentary spasms of hope into you when you're up against it; nothing but soggy, dripping clouds, clayey streets, and misery. The worst of it is, the rum-mills of Portland are the most attractive joints of the kind on the Slope, so that when you hit Portland with nothing on you but your constitution wherewith to try for a win-out, the Tantalus game played on you by the bright-lighted booze factories, with their pianists, harpists and fiddlers zipping away in

all the back rooms, is a hard proposition to endure in the midst of the exterior gloom.

"Worst of it is, if you walk into a Portland joy-joint just to get out of the wet, and stand in front of the bar for two minutes without buying, you're dead liable to get vagged. The barkeep sizes you up out of the tail of his eye and keeps the other eye on the stop-watch he puts on strangers entering the plant. If you don't call for what you want, but haven't got the price of, within two minutes flat, he sneaks from behind the bar, steps to the front door, whistles for a web-foot cop, and the next day you're breaking rock. They didn't get me this way, for I had the finish of my '89 whirl in San Francisco, and when I got to Portland I didn't want anything but work or a ticket East. But I saw the barkeeps and the web-foot cops put it on a lot of other hard-luckers for not buying within the specified time, and it struck me that it was a cold and unfeeling way of handling strangers.

"I didn't have any particular reason for going to Portland, anyhow. I had struck San Francisco from New York a couple of months before with a bundle of money and one of those cinch-betting absinthe things that had such a good start on me that I couldn't catch up with it so long as I had the dust to keep it going. I played 'em as far back

as I could at the San Francisco tracks, but it was no use. I ate up all the 1 to 3 third shots they pushed at me, and was even afraid to play one to win at the cinch-looking price of 3 to 5 or 1 to 2 on, so wise did the green stuff talk to me. Well, you know what the game was out in California at that time. The betting on the one you liked, and that figured to win, would open up, say, at even money, and you could write your own ticket on the rest. After you'd got your money down on the right one to get the place, taking about 2 to 5 on to make a 'moral' of it, the flash 'ud come in on one of the other skates, the price on which would hop down from about 15 to 1 to 4 to 5 on. Then there'd be flashes on one or two more of 'em, and by the time the bunch went to the post your horse would be backed 'way up for a lobster.

"The nag that got the biggest flash down always won by four blocks, helped out by the pailful of cocaine they'd give him, and that's all there was to it. Your first favorite, that you played for the place at 2 to 5 on, would generally be 'coming strong at the finish' and would be put down on the charts as 'short of work, due the next time out.' The judges would cackle a bit about 'reversals in form' and then it was up to you to guess which one was 'meant' to win the next race.

"It was a game that you could only beat by being in the know, and Eastern pikers had no business out there. I was too busy experimenting with the green stuff—straight, drips and frappés—to snuggle up to the clique that knew how all the races were going to be run, one, two, three, and that's why they put the final crimp in me within two weeks after I hit San Francisco. After I'd got in hock for all of the gear and had done the usual ten-day trick in the you-have-them ward I crawled out to hunt for a job. California is the El Dorado of the world, maybe not. I never saw so many broke men in my life as I knocked against in California. On the level, there were broke grafters from the East working on the streets of 'Frisco for one dollar a day and wearing plug hats and silk socks, when I was out there.

"I didn't see a chance to pull out in the middle of that kind of a game and so I got a job for the one trip as tenth assistant supercargo of the steamer Columbia, bound from San Francisco for Portland, Oregon. I got my board and passage for three days, eighteen hours each, of freight-checking work and with nothing in sight when I struck the wet country. When I got 'paid off' from the steamer on the dismal morning she pulled into Portland all I had besides a passable front was an alli-

gator hand satchel with a silver-backed hair brush in it that I had somehow or other overlooked when I was hocking things in San Francisco. I got three dollars on the satchel and brush ten minutes after getting off the boat, ate, got a shine and a shave and then struck out in the wet for a job.

"They were going to pinch me for a new crook in town at most of the stores and offices where I walked in and said: 'Gimme work.' Several of 'em told me that they didn't see any sense in this thing of being broke and asked me why I didn't scoot up to Astoria and get a job in a salmon cannery, inasmuch as the salmon season was on. They think every man up there that's broke is a Chinnook or a Siwash, y' see. I was beginning to think that the salmon-cleaning game would be about my graft, at that, when, along in the afternoon after I had hit about 200 different commercial shacks for some kind of a job, I saw a sign, 'Pacific Historical Association,' shining in the wet outside the second-story window of an office building. So I went upstairs to see what kind of an outfit the Pacific Historical Association was. There was only one occupant of the office, which was littered with new books, but he was enough. He had on all colors of gig lamps and he was from New York.

He gave me the open face when I shambled in with my duds dripping rain.

"'Ha! You're from the old town,' said he.

"'How d'je guess it?' said I.

"'Oh, because you've got the swagger and because you look as if you're four-flushing under adverse circumstances,' said this hot card with the penetrating eye. 'Now when did you say you'll be wanting to go to work on our "History of the Pioneers of Oregon and Washington"? Tomorrow morning, did you say, you wanted to start out?'

"Pretty previous talk, wasn't it? But I was so darned glad to light on a duck from back here that knew how to get to the point, even if it was a bluff, that I warmed up to him from the jump.

"'Quick action you're giving me for my money, ain't it?' said I to him. 'What do you want me to do with this "History of the Pioneers of Oregon and Washington"—write it or sell it?'

"'Help to get the data, that's all. Book's not out yet. We're getting it together now. Oh, you'll do all right. Been hunting for you. Why didn't you get in before? All right. You start out in the morning—let's see, you can go to Baker City first and clean up that place, and then I'll find you territory once you get started.'

"'That's great,' said I. 'What do I go to Baker City on—my face?'

"'I guess not,' said the Pacific Historical Association—he was the whole thing himself. 'Don't get gay. I'll fix you out. Here's the scheme: You dig out the old geezers, get next to them, interview 'em about their early experiences, get a line on what they've done for the great and glorious West, with dates scattered in—stories of their encounters with grizzly bears when all this region was a howling wilderness, etc.—how they built the first log hut this side of Cheyenne, and all that—and then you write it up—about 1,000 words for each of 'em, you understand—maybe a little more for the genuine Heap-Bigs—an' show 'em what you've written. That's when you do business. Their biographies, or autobiographies, are to be included in the "History of the Pioneers of Oregon and Washington," with a picture of each of 'em, and it costs each of 'em $100 a throw to break into the history. See? You get twenty-five per cent. commission on all the pioneers you write up. This is no con. game. Don't get that into your head. It's on the level. I've made $200,000 at it, working my way from Arizona up here. It's like finding money. There's your chance, if you want to win out.'

"'You're good,' said I. 'Meantime, I'm not togged out to make bluffs of this kind. And I think I'd be a frost, anyhow, asking people questions about their ——'

"'No you wouldn't,' said the Pacific Historical Association. 'And, say, you want a side line. I'm introducing a new typewriter out here. Seventy-five dollars apiece. You can make each of the pioneers cough up for a typewriter and you get twenty-five dollars a machine. Come on out. I'm going to dress you up. Of course, you've got no trunk. Neither did I when I first hit Arizona. Got twelve of 'em now.'

"Say, that was a queer snap. I couldn't naturally take much stock in it, for I wasn't any more of a come-on then than the average hard-lucker from this town, but you ought to have seen how it went through. The whirlwind Pacific Historical Association—he was really a rattling nice fellow, and perfectly on the level—took me out and togged me out to the limit—suit, overcoat, full sets of gear of all kinds—and then registered me at his hotel, the best in the State of Oregon. I ate dinner that evening with him and his pretty San Francisco wife, and you'd have thought they had both known me from infancy.

"The next morning, with fifty dollars expense

money in my clothes, I started for Baker City to write up the pioneers thereof and to sell 'em typewriters. It was something easy. They all wanted to get into the 'History of the Pioneers of Oregon and Washington.' Young ducks not out of their thirties wanted to break into the volume, and offered me bonuses to work 'em in. One of the rules of the Pacific Historical Association, however, was that no pioneer of less than fifty years of age could get into the work. But I had plenty of business with the old-timers. I'd write them up ornately, filling in all the bare spots with pipe-dreamy yarns, generally winding up each write-up with the statement that the subject thereof had been 'frequently mentioned' for Congress or for Governor, or for 'something equally as good,' and within one month from the day I met up with B. Franklin Granville, the hustling Pacific Historical Association, I counted up my change in Seattle and found that I had about $980. I scattered the typewriters around my trail and made almost as much money out of 'em as I did out of the write-ups, and to cap the whole game I dug up my father's missing brother—he's in for a swell send-off in the History of the Pioneers of Oregon and Washington —and he didn't have a thing but about 60,000 acres of sheep land, and the sheep on the acres, in Malheur

County, Oregon. He thought I was a pretty nice, chesty young fellow, and he gave me $1,000 for a Christmas present. I was $3,800 good when I cashed in at the office where I had taken a chance on the wet sign of the Pacific Historical Association, and B. Franklin Granville got out his book and delivered the goods all right, at that.

"Then I thought I'd go down to the San Francisco tracks and see if I couldn't get some of that money back that I had handed to the sure-thing layers of odds when I went broke, and when I struck the Barbary coast of 'Frisco I just accidentally set up another partnership with the green stuff. Oh, yes, I got back to New York all right a couple of months later. Man that had been running an Eastern string on the 'Frisco tracks gave up the game in disgust, and when he shipped his string back here, he let me hitch on, as a feeder and rubber, for the freight ride across the continent. But that end of it's got nothing to do with the good win-out I made in Portland."

TALE THE FIFTEENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 5 Speaketh Divertingly of the Reliever Stage of ye Jag

TALE THE FIFTEENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 5 SPEAKETH DIVERTINGLY OF THE RELIEVER STAGE OF YE JAG

"WHEN No. 9 told some time ago of his involuntary steamer trip to Galveston and how he won out of that town I observed that he wore a certain perky, conceited air, as much as to say that he was most likely the only member of this organization that ever found himself aboard an ocean-going boat without knowing how he got there," said Ex-Tank No. 5, the member with the two big diamond rings. "I just want to tell him that he wasn't, or isn't. What's more, when No. 9 discovered himself on the high seas he had money and a front, while I ——"

"Look a-here," said No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, rising suddenly. "What the dickens is this outfit getting to be—a Snug Harbor? What's the meaning of all this sailorizing talk? I put the matter to the club: Ain't we had just about enough heavy-weather and deep-water chaw in these experience meetings? Now, here comes Five along with a salty, green-seas ——"

"Pipe down, Seven," said the club in chorus. "Go ahead, Five, and spring it."

"Well. If I'd a known, when I helped to get this gang together, that it was going to fizzle into a kind o' Mariners' Union, you can bet your ——"

"Give us a rest, Seven," said the Chief Ex-Tank peremptorily. "Five has got the deck."

"I was going to say," resumed No. 5, "that it's all right and easy when you come to, wallowing in an outside swell and in the teeth of a howling gale, as it were, and find that you've got your front and your dustbag practically unimpaired, like Nine did when he woke up on the Galveston boat. But this thing o' finding yourself swashing around in blue water after carrying a jag down to the reliever stage ——"

"Wait a minute, Five," interrupted the Chief Ex-Tank. "'Reliever'—'reliever'—jag carried down to the 'reliever stage'—that's kind of a new one on me, and I can perceive that the other members seem to be a bit puzzled over the expression. What's the 'reliever stage' of a jag, anyhow?"

"Why, I am amazed," said No. 5, "that any member of this organization should be ignorant of so simple and direct a final-stage method to obtain absolutely required booze—but, stay. Come to think of it, the reliever scheme is a Chicago idea,

and maybe I was the first to work it in this town. But just you people let me get this story started, and you'll find out how the reliever system works.

"That jag in the fall of '91 was set in motion because I was picking 'em too easily down at Gravesend. Why, I couldn't lose at that meeting, I tell you honest. I didn't pack around any dope book or handicapping outfit, and I cut out all consideration of weights, jockeys, distances, previous time made, whole thing; just played 'em on their names, and I'm giving it to you right, I couldn't lose. Didn't get on more'n one dead one out of the whole six on a day's card. Won so much of it at that meeting that I thought I was dreaming—used to feel, when my pockets bulged out at the wind-up every day, like hiring stable boys to turn the hose on me so's I could find out if I was awake. I started in with a fifty dollar shoestring on the first day, and I had $750 at the finish of the fourth day. That made me too husky to work at an office desk.

"When I went back to the office to tell 'em that I was too strong for pen-pushing any more they told me that I was fired, anyhow, and I was glad of it. I kept on at the track, and at the end of the first week I had pushed two of the bookies on the dead line out o' business. I got one of 'em

to give me 300 to 1 on a combination of the whole six to win on the last day of the week, put five dollars on it, and it went through in a gallop. Bookie paid me off and then went and bought himself a clay pipe and ten cents' worth of tobacco and waited for somebody to come along and hand him money to start agoing again.

"I was doing a beer sozzle all this time, and cutting the strong stuff out. Now, if I'd kept the beer sozzle going, I'd probably have owned the track by get-away day, but three days before the meeting closed I switched to whiskey and tobasco sauce, with occasional absinthes for toners, and that got me going. I had soaked 'em for $5,200 up to that third day before the meeting closed, but the switch from beer to the hot stuff made me so cautious that I began then to play 'em on form. The bookies had a case of 'You lose' on me for the rest of the three days, and at the wind-up of the meeting I only had $2,800 left. Pretty good bunch to pick up from a shoestring at that. It was just good enough, anyhow, to make me decide that I wasn't going to do any more work for the remainder of my life. Me work any more? Why, I forgot what work meant.

"By the time the meeting closed the tobasco sauce and things were producing night pictures for

me of pink zebras crossing purple bridges and that kind, but I couldn't see any knock-off in it when I was weighted down with a $2,800 bundle. So I kept the jag moving at a 1:40 flat gait, and in order to enjoy it in comfort I went uptown and hired a seven-room furnished flat all for myself, got a Dutchman for a cook, staked the refrigerator to a stack of greens and reds in quart bottles, and started in to relish life. Now, if I'd only ha' stayed inside the flat, and not gone jamming around town, I might have—but there's no use talking about what I might have done. The flat wasn't big enough for me after the sun went down, and when I got downtown with the gang my $2,800 began to fall off me so quick that it made me sneeze. At the end of three weeks I was down to $300, and I figured that I would blow in $100, pinch $200 for hospital money and a starter when I got through seeing the icthyosaurians and things in the bug-ward, and then get a job somewhere and hold on to it until the spring races started, when I intended to drive every man in the game out o' business.

"That calculation didn't go through. I got touched for the whole $300 by a night-liner. He only rolled me for the long green, and let me hang on to my jewellery. I didn't make any holler, for

I couldn't have fastened it on him, but I had a think coming when I woke up broke the next morning. My pin went first. Got fifty dollars on that. Then the ring got in for ninety dollars. The ring money lasted me a couple o' days. The watch was the next to go, for twenty-five dollars only. That supplied the jag for twenty-four hours. My month at my flat was up by this time, and the janitor was putting up a yell for another month's rent in advance. Told him to chase himself, and fired my Dutch cook, and moved to a room. My dress suit had to go next. I got ten dollars on it. That ten lasted me for fully twenty minutes. After it was finished I looked through the closet. The weather was still warm, and so I figured I could spare the topcoat and the overcoat. Got ten dollars on them, and this kept the jag jogging along at a moderate pace for a night. I got down to the suits the next morning. Got five dollars for the couple of good ones that I wrapped up and took out, but by the time evening came around the jag was hollering for another outlay. Then I put on the best suit I had, a black cutaway outfit, and had an Eighth avenue old-clothes man come around and take a look at all the duds I had left. He gave me $2.35 for the lot, and packed them away with him. Next morning I woke up

without the price, and I had been nibbled on by pale blue giraffes all night, at that. So I had to put the reliever act through.

"I went down to a Baxter street joint and had the gazebu look over the suit I had on. I asked him what kind of a suit he'd give me, with five dollars to boot, for the cutaway rig. He rigged me out in a cottony, second-hand sack outfit, and gave me the fiver in exchange for the good suit. That's the reliever act, gentlemen. The geezer relieves you of the togs you put up a front with in exchange for a bum outfit and the price. I got back to him the next morning, and asked him how much he'd give me to boot, with any old kind of an outfit, for the suit he'd peddled me the day before. You ought to have seen the rig he put on me then —the high-water boys that only reached to my shoe tops, vest that he had to split up the back to get on me, and a patched coat that was No. 13, boys' size. I got seventy-five cents to boot. That was the second and final stage of that reliever turn. I got over to the Bowery then, and began to use up what I could of the five-cent hooters purveyed on that thoroughfare.

"The seventy-five cents was a lot of money for that purpose, and I don't just remember how I managed to drift down to the pier under the

Brooklyn Bridge without being pinched as a vag for I surely was a holy show in the last fitout the Baxter street man gave me. I remember getting into a good-natured chaw with some longshoremen down there, and I guessed I must ha' asked them how to get aboard a deep-sea boat without coughing up a ticket or the price of one. It don't make any difference, anyhow, what I did —the fact remains that I woke up the next morning in the steerage—in the steerage, mind you—and not in any hifalutin, stateroom, like No. 9 did when he went to Galveston—of the steamship Algonquin of the Clyde line bound for Charleston and Jacksonville. A couple o' other ducks in the steerage told me the name of the boat and where she was going. They said that a couple of longshoremen had pushed me aboard, through an open deadlight or something like that, 'way up forward. They got me aboard in the shelter of a lot of bales of goods, which is why the purser or the chap at the gangway didn't get next to me. They said the purser hadn't been around yet for the steerage tickets, but that I'd better drill out o' sight for a while, because the purser was liable to be around at any minute. They spread a lot of old tarpaulin over me, and, sure enough, the purser did come around down below for the steerage tickets a little

while later. I didn't know it till one of the steerage ducks gave me a dig and told me it was all right, and that I could get out from beneath the tarpaulin.

"I don't need to go into details as to how I felt for the information of the honored members of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates. I'd been nursing that jag, you understand, for more than six weeks and giving it about everything it asked for, and here I was, a blooming steerage stowaway on a coaster, and seeing all colors of pythons and things in broad daylight, and no more chance of getting a drink than of walking ashore! It was a bad job. It was the worst job I ever stacked up against. I bummed a cigarette from one of the chaps in the steerage, a painter who was going down to Jacksonville to get a winter job, and that cigarette doped me up a little and kept me from having 'em right there, and bad. I extracted a few more cigarettes from him in the course of the two-and-a-half-day trip, and smoked them because I wanted to forget. I was the toughest-looking mug in the steerage, and they were a fierce-looking lot, too. I forgot to say that, down to the time of my getting aboard the ship, I had had a good derby hat. I must have gone to sleep somewhere, for the hat I had when I came

to on the boat was the rankest, batteredest looking, variety-turn derby you ever saw. There was a monogram pasted inside of it that read, 'A. Wappl, Wien,' and I guess the Austrian who traded his lid off for mine while I slept must have been some broken-down sport from Vienna. The soberer I got the more the horrible picture I made worked on me. You never saw a picture of a hobo that looked half so bad as I looked. But there was no help for it. There was no way out, and I didn't see any way out even after I landed, for a man that's broke can't do a graft of any kind anywhere if he hasn't got a front to put up. I intended to go right on with the boat down to Jacksonville, but that was not to be. The purser came nosing around the steerage a few minutes before the boat tied up at the Charleston wharf and he spotted me. My face wasn't familiar to him.

"'Stowaway, hey?' said he to me. 'They vag stowaways in this town, my bucko. I'll turn you over to the dock cop when we tie up.'

"And he did.

"'Here's a stone crusher for the chain gang,' said the purser to the cop after he had taken me over the gangway.

"The cop, a big, good-natured dub, led me

along the pier shed to its entrance on East Bay street, I think it was, and turned me loose.

"'There's a freight or two out for the South this afternoon, Willie,' said he to me. 'Better hop one.' I walked away down the street.

"It was a cold, late October morning and raining hard. If there's any gloomier place on the map than Charleston on a cold, rainy day in the fall, I never saw it. But I had to walk. I saw a lot o' black and white cops eyeing me pretty hard, and I had to walk. I was wet through in three minutes and shivering, and the trip had worn the jag off so that I was hungry, but I had to keep a-moving if I wanted to stay off the rock pile. Say, d'ye know that I envied the coons that were trucking cotton under the dry pier sheds? I did, for a fact. I reflected that when they knocked off work at night they had some kind of a shack to go to and get warm, and some kind of a shakedown to have a doss on, and an eat coming to them right along. I even figured on the pickaninnies and comfortable cur dogs they probably had around their wickieups; and I certainly felt a heap lonesome trudging along there in the cold and wet outside the pier sheds.

"I don't like to think of that day. I don't know how I got through it. I remember that I

crept up an alleyway to the back door of one of the hotels, and struck a guy with a white paper cap on for a hand-out. My rig-out was against me, and he gave me the quick chase. When it began to get dark, and still raining, I thought I might as well go to some station house and vag myself, for I began to think I'd croak from the cold and the wet. Just as this idea got into my head, though, I passed by the fireroom of some kind of a mill, and I walked in. A big, black darky was firing the furnaces. I asked him if he'd let me sleep in the furnace room during his watch. The coon looked at me closely for half a minute. They've got intuition, those people.

"'He'p yo'sef, boss,' said he. 'Yo' kin shake down in dat cohnuh. Yo' all's f'um de No'th, ahn't yo'? Ah's dun bin putty nigh col' t' def up dat a-way mahse'f.'

"The big coon fireman gave me a handful of newspapers to put under my head for a pillow, and I fell down into the corner he pointed out, close to the furnace, and had a sleep the like of which I never enjoyed before or since. I slept until five o'clock the next morning, and then the darky fireman shook me up and told me I'd better be moving on before the engineer came down, or my being in the furnace room might get him into trouble. So

I hunched together and went out into the cold and wet again, for it was still pouring down rain.

"I was trudging down East Bay street along about eight o'clock that morning, without a win-out idea in my head, and hungry as the devil, when I met a chap I had known in New York. He had been a receiver of telegraph messages at one of the windows of the main office of the Western Union on Broadway when I knew him, and he was then taking messages at the window of the Charleston office. He didn't know me, when he looked at me, from an elbow of zinc pipe, and you couldn't blame him at that, but he remembered me all right when I told him who I was, and he was all right, too, that chap. He took me around to a feed shop —and got looked at, too, pretty hard, for connubzin with a hobo—and then he braved his landlady by taking me to his dinky, but warm, little hall room. There he planted me with a pipe, a box of tobacco, and the morning paper—oh, he certainly was good to me! He told me to wait till he got back for lunch, and he'd rig me out in a fit-out of his duds. After I got shaved and bathed up and togged out in his No. 2 suit I began to feel like a white man. I knew I had to take a chance if I wanted to win out and ever get back to New York. I'd been reading the entries for the Jerome Park

races in the *News and Courier*. I had one of those lightning, dead-sure hunches that I had three of the races right. I asked my telegraphing friend if there was a poolroom in Charleston. He told me where one was run on the quiet.

"'A two-spot'll be enough,' I told him, and I found the poolroom. I put the two dollars on Firenzi at 5 to 1 to win. It went through. I put the ten dollars on Lamplighter to win at 10 to 1. That went through, too, in a canter. Then I borrowed a dopebook and went at it. I wanted to feel sure that Long Fellow was going to win the last race, no matter how long a price they put on him. The house betting on Long Fellow was already 12 to 1. I couldn't see anything in it but Long Fellow, and yet there were ten good ones in the race at shorter prices. I didn't make any side steps about it, but just waited for the track betting to come in. Long Fellow started at 15 to 1, and went up to 20. Then I planted the $100 William on him. It was a mile and a furlong race. Long Fellow didn't get so much as a call, not even a whistle, until the stretch, and my shoulders got scroonched down again. Then it was, all of a sudden, 'Long Fellow in the stretch by a head, Top Gallant second,' and, for the wind-up, 'Long Fellow wins easy by three lengths.'

"I walked out of that poolroom with $2,100. They paid it to me pretty reluctantly, though, thinking, I suppose, that I was a wire tapper. But I had it in my kick all the same, when the boy that had been good to me got home from his office. I passed him over a thousand, and you ought to have seen him look at me:

"'Damn Charleston,' he said after a while. 'I'm going back to New York.'

"I waited in Charleston for a few days, until the Aglonquin stopped there on her return trip up to New York, and when she got in my friend and I hired a couple of bridal chambers for the cruise up to New York. I sat, during the trip, at the right side of the purser who had chucked me over the side, expecting me to be pinched for the rock pile, but he didn't know it. That's the difference between a front and no front."

TALE THE SIXTEENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank (Hoodoo) No. 13 Becometh Discursive as to the Dreamy Isles of ye Pacific

TALE THE SIXTEENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK (HOODOO) NO. 13 BECOMETH DISCURSIVE AS TO THE DREAMY ISLES OF YE PACIFIC

"THIS isn't so much about my final win-out and the fun I've had ever since in being good as it is about the smallness of the world," said Ex-Tank (Hoodoo) No. 13. "Even when you look at it all four ways this world isn't much bigger than a gob o' gum. If it was, I wouldn't be here to-night enjoying my own goodness and reprobating evil of all kinds whatsoever, especially over-indulgence in alcoholic stimulants. I'd probably be somewhere in the middle of Turkest ——

"But that brings me to where this thing started, to that time down in New Orleans when the winter track put me up against it and when I tried to make good for board and keep by selling 'Picturesque Turkestan,' in 112 numbers, fifty cents a number, to people who all looked upon me as a second-story worker trying to get the lay of the houses and sicked the dogs on me. I couldn't get

used to that, and so when I ran in at my boarding-house with a postal clerk who had a straight tour all the way from New Orleans to Washington, and who offered to smuggle me up on his car, under the bags, as far as the capital, I took him in a minute, and mighty grateful, at that, to get up near the edge of the world. I got a temporary sub. job conductoring on an electric car for a month or so in Washington, and when that flattened out I shook dice with myself to see whether it 'ud be New York or Chicago. Chicago won. I had twenty dollars saved up and I went across the aqueduct bridge in Washington to a bank layout and on one boxful ran the twenty dollar shoe string up into what looked like a cordage trust to me then—$245. I togged out, keeping the frosty eye turned to the red stuff, and bought a parlor car ticket to Chicago. It was right on this parlor car that the whole game began.

When the train pulled out of Washington, there was only one other occupant of the parlor car besides myself—a very handsome, self-contained, well-groomed woman of thirty or under. I had a chair five or six numbers behind hers, and I occupied myself for the first twenty miles or so out of Washington in studying the fine contour of the back of her head, and in mentally jolting myself

for not winning one like that, settling down, and being a good citizen of the republic. Reflections such as these made me tired, as usual, and I fell to nodding. I was awakened by some talking, and when I rubbed my eyes I saw a drunken dude addressing himself to the lady up forward in the car. He would have looked a chump had he been entirely sober; drunk, he was a show. I could see that he didn't know the lady, and that he was addressing himself to her without her permission—for she was glancing back in my direction. I walked up to him. He turned upon me with dude ferocity.

"'Johnny,' said I, pulling the bell cord, 'you don't want to ride on this train. Take the next one. I'm going to ditch you.'

"The train came rapidly to a standstill, and I knew that it was important for me to dump the little blackguard before the conductor heaved in sight. So I seized him by the scruff of the neck, persuaded him to the vestibule door with my knee in the small of his back and let him down a gentle declivity. He mumbled that he was only going as far as Harper's Ferry to his shooting lodge, but I told him that he could make a signal flag of his shirt and halt the next train. Then I let him roll down the little mossy decline and hustled back to

my chair just as the conductor came running in from the rear coach. He asked me if I had pulled the bell cord, and I told him yes—that I'd done it accidentally with the crook of my cane. He regarded me with suspicion, but he had no notion that I had ditched one of his passengers on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"The lady thanked me after the conductor left the car. I didn't want to make her think that she had, out of courtesy, to be chummy with me just because I had protected her from the drunken dude, and so I didn't press any talk on her, but went back to my seat and figured on what a nice twenty-mile walk the duck that I dumped would have before pulling up to the gate of his lodge at or near Harper's Ferry. It was consoling to think that maybe he'd sue the road and get $50,000 or $100,000 damages out of it—not. I met the lady face to face in the dining car two or three times during the journey to Chicago and she nodded to me pleasantly, but I never was much in the fresh guy line, and I didn't try to scrape up an acquaintance with her. I saw her in the station in Chicago, when we were debarking, and she gave me a pleasant smile and disappeared. In the swirl of the game that I stacked up against in Chicago from the day I hit the place I forgot all about the incident.

"The town of Boreas and the bad aniline booze thereof had me down and out within a couple of months. It was coming on winter and I had some thinks about striking out for the coast; the Chicago winter chaps my lips. I didn't know how to make San Francisco without a front, and I had passed up the front in trying to beat the Chicago game. Lucky Baldwin had been racing a string of California horses on the Chicago tracks that summer and I met up with one of his assistant trainers, a man I'd met when I was well in the push on the Southern tracks. The trainer had a couple of carloads of Lucky's horses ready for the trip to the coast, and he took me along. I landed in San Francisco with four dollars and a healthy appetite for those quart bottles of red wine, with cock roaches in 'em, that you get out there two for two-bits.

"It was a Saturday morning when I got into San Francisco that time, and I found out as soon as I got there that racing was a dead game in California for that winter. The owners of the tracks were scrapping among themselves, and the Legislature shut down on the runners altogether that season. That dished me on two or three good things that Baldwin's man told me he intended to put through. I circulated around, and found that the

whole gang from the East had gone back there in disgust when it was announced that there was to be no racing. So I didn't know a soul in town, and I was sore because I hadn't stayed back East myself. I had to pass up the cochineal in quarts, and got a job in a hardware store for eight dollars a week. It was a cerulean proposition, but there wasn't anything else for it. After paying my board with the bulk of my first week's pay, I took the remainder of the bunch and went down to the Orpheum to seek forgetfulness of wrought-iron nails and copper tacks in a variety show. I coughed a dollar for a seat in the orchestra.

"There was a fine-looking chap in the seat on my right who seemed to have been dining pretty well. He was, as I say, a fine-looking, big man, thirty-five or around that, gig-lamped and togged to the limit, but he had sure been toying with the sparkling stuff before he got to the show. He began to talk to me and from that he began buying the gold seal in quarts.

"'I've been so long away from the coast,' he said after a while, 'that I'm lonesome. I don't break away from home and fireside only once every two or three years, and every time I get back here the fewer people I know.'

"'Well,' said I, 'this town isn't growing any

better in your absence, and that's the reason I advise you to sort o' keep that wad of yours under cover, and to leave the gig-lamps at your hotel, while you're out having fun. There are a lot of natural-born pinchers of shiny stuff out this way, as of course you know.'

"He looked me over and told me I was right. Then he bought another quart, and, after inspecting me pretty carefully, he asked me how I was making out. Very badly, I told him.

"'Well, I'll tell you,' he said. 'I don't know anything about you except that you've got a square jaw and a proper Mulligan look, but I guess you're worth taking a chance on, at that. I've got one of the biggest coffee plantations in the Hawaiian Islands. It's a few miles out of Hilo, on the island of Hawaii. A kid cousin of mine has been with me as timekeeper—I run 300 to 500 coolies during the busy season—during the past couple of years, and he wants to break off for a year's vacation up here in the States. I pay him $200 a month and he lives with me. Want the job?'

"Now, I figured this to be pipe talk at first, but after a couple of minutes' reflection I could see that this man was too solid to be a smoker of seconds.

"'Just about,' said I.

"'All right. You're engaged,' he said, and then again I thought he might be talking through his chapeau, for he didn't mention the thing again until after the show. I was going to bid him good-bye, and held out my hand.

"'Where you going?' he said, sort of surprised. 'As my timekeeper, it's up to you to keep tab on me until next Monday morning, when we're going to take the steamer Australia for Honolulu.'

"'Say, is all this on the level?' I couldn't help but ask him.

"That kind of nettled him.

"'You've got to come to taw with a whole lot more suddenness that this if you expect to work for me, my boy,' he said, and then we went to the Palace Hotel, where he was staying, and he showed me a lot of pictures of his place down in the Hawaiian Islands. Then he togged me out in some of his clothes—we were the same size, and he said they'd do until the stores opened Monday, when he'd fix me out in a new rig—and informed me that I was drawing pay from that day, inclusive. He registered me at the Palace, and I'm bound to say that there was action in every move he made between that Saturday midnight and the hour we took the Australia on the following Monday. If

he didn't blow in $500 during that period he didn't spend a cent, and he never got under the tide, either, but was game and sensible enough to keep just on edge and no more. The trip down on the Australia was sort of a sobering up proposition—a gradual taper, but not too gradual. I felt like a two-year-old when we pulled into the harbor of Honolulu seven days later. I found the boss to be a dignified and quiet man and he didn't sidestep a little bit, after his jamboree was over, over the compact he had made with me at the Orpheum variety show. He explained the whole coffee-raising game to me and I in turn gave him a sort of a sketch of the damphoolishness I had been mixing up in for the past few years. When we got to Honolulu we knew and liked each other.

"After a couple of days in Honolulu, during which he introduced me around to the President and the Cabinet and the Judges of the Supreme Court and a few people like that—and wasn't I thinking of the 'Picturesque Turkestan' days, though!—we took the inter-island boat Like-Like and drew into the harbor of Hilo the next morning.

"'My wife didn't expect me so soon,' said my boss, 'so she's not down here to meet me.'

"Then we got into a hack and drove eight or

ten miles out into the country (there'd be no use in my trying to describe such country as that—it was a plain dope-dream for me) to his ranch. Well, there was about as far as the eye could see of it, and the home in the middle of it was a bungalow palace. My boss's wife heard the rattle of the carriage wheels, and she hurried out to the front veranda. She was still as pretty as a picture. I knew her in a minute, but I wasn't going to say anything.

"After the first few hugs were over the boss turned to me and introduced me to his wife.

"'New timekeeper, to take Joe's place,' said he. 'Good fellow, and you'll like him.'

"Meantime she was sizing me up with a queer little pucker about her forehead. Then her face lit up, and she flushed.

"'Why,' she suddenly exclaimed, 'aren't you the gentleman who—six months ago—train from Washington to Chicago—why, of course you are! I remember you perfectly, and you remember me, for you are smiling over it. Why, John, this is the gentleman who ——'

"Well, she certainly did give me the cordial handshake while she was telling her mystified husband about that little incident on the train near the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She had told

him about the affair as soon as she arrived back in Hawaii from her visit to her sister up in the States, and here I was, the veritable duck. Oh, I fell into a pleasant path there, all right. I liked the lotus-eating game down there so much that when my boss's wife's pretty sister came along for a visit on the coffee ranch a couple of months later, and I married her three months later on, I hated to give up my job, but the boss wanted a New York agent and I had to show a brother-in-lawy spirit by taking the place.

"Which is why—the smallness of the globe—I'm here to-night, benign and good, reprobating evil in all its forms——"

Here the Chief Ex-Tank's gavel fell, and the meeting adjourned, cutting off Hoodoo Thirteen's reprobation of evil in its flower.

TALE THE SEVENTEENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 8 Hath a Good Word for Ye Much-Maligned Burg, Council Bluffs

TALE THE SEVENTEENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 8 HATH A GOOD WORD FOR YE MUCH-MALIGNED BURG, COUNCIL BLUFFS

"Now, talking about towns, Council Bluffs gets more knocks than any town I know of," said Ex-Tank No. 8, when a discussion arose on the subject of the most hopeless cities in the country in which to go broke. "But I've been up against worse than Council Bluffs. Council Bluffs is a clammy looker, and all that, but there's one good thing about it: they don't run you in out there if you strike the place in the dead of winter without an overcoat. The constables just look you over, and if you don't make the mistake of shivering, and just slide along as if you never wore an overcoat in your life, and wouldn't wear a sealskin blanket if you had one, they don't chase you. This thing of being compelled to dodge cops, as you have to do in a good many towns I could mention, simply because you've left the overcoat in the last town back, done up with camphor balls, is not what it's cracked up to be, and that's why I give

Council Bluffs what's coming to it in this little matter of detail. But that's not all, either. I won out once in Council Bluffs, and ——"

"I would warn No. 8," interposed Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, rising, "that none but truthful statements are spread upon the records of this organization, and that this outfit has no sort of affiliation whatever with the Harlem Liars' Club; consequently, in making such a manifestly impossible statement that he at one time won out in Council Bluffs, No. 8 is guilty of ——"

"Point not sustained," interrupted the Chief Ex-Tank. "Any man who can find himself and win out in Chicago, as our records prove No. 8 to have done, is capable of landing right even in Council Bluffs, insurmountable as the difficulty of such an undertaking would seem. No. 8 will proceed."

"Oh, it wasn't so hard," resumed No. 8. "I don't exactly understand how it was that my ticket read to Council Bluffs and not across the bridge to Omaha. I don't remember how I got that ticket in Chicago anyhow. After I got twelve dollars and a ticket on the overcoat way down on South Clark street I remembered figuring it out that Omaha would be a pretty good place to hit up next, but somehow

or another I didn't get my money down right in the scalper's office where I got the ticket, so that the conductor ditched me at Council Bluffs at four o'clock in the morning. It was early in January, and Council Bluffs was covered up with a couple of feet of snow. I was asleep in the smoker when the conductor came along and gave me the shoulder hunch and yelled, 'Council Bluffs—this is where you fall off,' at me, and that was the first I knew that I wasn't booked any further than Council Bluffs. In stepping off the train I slipped and fell on the ice, and I came down on the pint bottle that I had in my rear right-hand pocket. Gentlemen, that was the bitterest moment of my life. I do not refer to the broken particles of glass that adhered to and penetrated me; but to be deposited at Council Bluffs at four of the clock on a mid-winter morning with two feet of snow on the ground and nary the price in your clothes, and then to have a whole carefully nursed pint go smash on you—well, I simply submit it to the club if that wasn't harder'n wrought nails."

A murmur of sympathy ran around the room.

"It was darker than ink when I picked myself up and tried to look around," resumed No. 8, "and still snowing. I missed my overcoat a lot. There wasn't a soul at the station, and the waiting-

rooms were locked up tight. I looked through the waiting-room windows and saw a big baseburner, red-hot all around the bottom, standing in the middle of the room; but its heat wasn't for me. When my train pulled out and left me standing there all alone in the snow, overcoatless, with thin summer russet shoes on, and a thirst that, up to that hour, had been plenteously assuaged for fully three weeks previously—well, I was almost sorry that I had not been good. I might even venture to say that, upon mentally turning over parts of my past career, I almost found myself deficient in some few respects. I had to keep a-moving or freeze to death, and so I struck up town. I had to make the first track in the snow myself, and it wasn't easy walking. Now, it was pretty cold, and I remembered that my underwear wasn't particularly warm. I got a short, grisly chuckle, anyhow, out of that suit of underwear I had on when I thought about it. It was silk, and it had cost me forty dollars. I had got four suits of it while I was doing my eight months' sober act in Chicago and on velvet, and I didn't know what had become of the other three suits. The grim humor of the blooming idea got a ghastly laugh out of me even as I ploughed along through the snow that black morning in Council Bluffs.

"The first gleam of light I caught sight of came from a couple of oil lamps in a corner rum factory that was just opening up at about five oclock. I didn't have the dime, but I went in, anyhow. There was a young fellow with a good-natured mug starting the ball a-rolling behind the bar. He looked me over when I walked in and over to the stove. At that I guess I must have been a good deal of an apparition to him. I had on a black cutaway coat, worsted trousers, the summer russets and a black derby, and I had about three inches of snow all over me.

"'Been doin' a job?' the young fellow behind the bar asked me.

"'Job?' said I, for I didn't understand him exactly, being a heap dazed with the cold and things.

"'Where did you leave your tools?' he asked, and then I got next to his meaning. I told him I hadn't got around to the cracking game yet.

"'You look like you'd been left at the post, at that,' he said consolingly, and then I told him I had just got in.

"'Nice place, when you say it fast—the Bluffs—like hell, ain't it?' he said, and I soon found out that he was from Chicago.

"'Have a few,' he said then, showing up a tall bottle, and when I told him I wasn't buying, he

said that he hadn't supposed I was, and passed the bottle up anyhow. Decent duck, wasn't he? Then he went to the back room and cooked his breakfast of steak, fried eggs and potatoes, and invited me to jump at it with him. If any member can name a town where he got better treatment than this that I had chucked at me from the go-off at poor old Council Bluffs, it's up to him to spell it out.

"By the time I got through with that breakfast I had reconsidered my vague idea of going down to the Missouri and hopping in between ice floes. I was about ready to go out and take a walk around —it was then long after daylight—when a customer came in. He and my friend the barkeep got into a bit of talk in the back room, and then the customer came out and asked me if I wanted a couple of days' work. He was the leading printer of the town, and he had a lot of new calendars that he wanted to have distributed around. I took the job on the spot. He took me up to his printing shop, and picked a pretty good Irish frieze ulster off a hook in his office.

"'This is my No. 2 blanket,' he said to me, 'but I don't wear it any. Put it on. If it fits you it's yours, if you want it.'

"I started out with a bunch of the calendars

under my arm and put in a whacking day's work. The printer gave me two dollars that night. I got a room for a half and a meal for two bits, and had one dollar and twenty-five cents velvet. The rum was cut out, for it was up to me to turn a win-out trick then. I finished the calendar-distributing job the next day, and got another two dollars. The printer asked me what I was going to do.

"'Well, I'll tell you,' he said, 'there's one of these here travelling mesmerist fakirs here that I've printed a lot of bills for, and he wants them scattered around right. He's going to give his show at the hall here to night. Want to stack up against him?'

"I met the long-bearded mesmerist and made a three dollar arrangement with him to scatter a couple of thousand handbills over the town. When I went to him that night to get my three dollars—it was just before the show was to begin and the hall was rapidly filling up—the mesmerist looked me over carefully as he handed me my pay. Then he told me that his chief assistant had gone off to Omaha on a toot and asked me if I thought I could go on and do anything as a mesmerist's helper. Of course I could.

"'I'm going to fire that fellow, anyhow,' the mesmerist told me. 'He's a good helper, and,

confidentially, between you and me, almost as good a con. man as I am myself, but he's getting too chesty, and he's untrustworthy besides. If you pan out any to-night maybe I'll engage you right along. Can you play any stringed instrument?"

"I told him that the banjo and guitar were my particular graft, and this delighted him. So I went to one of the dressing-rooms, stripped, and put on the gutta percha undersuit that mesmerists' assistants wear to protect their hides from the pins and needles that are stuck into them, and resumed my clothes while the mesmerist sat and gave me directions as to what I was to do.

"That was a hot night's work, but I don't think I depart from the truth when I state that I made an emphatic hit both with the audience and the mesmerist, who was a pretty smooth old guy. All I had to do was to act dense and obtuse before I was plunged into the hypnotic trance, and then to liven up and do whatever the mesmerist told me to do. The worst end of it was the onions, turnips and candles that I had to eat with apparent relish, and the kerosene oil that I had to swallow with the gusto of a hypnotized man. I also found that my gutta percha suit was vulnerable in two or three places, especially when big yaps from the audience borrowed hatpins from their girls and prodded me

with them. I managed to get through this end of it without giving the snap away, however, and the mesmerist warmed up to me a heap as the show went on. When, after I had finished a candle-chewing performance and he snapped me behind the ear and brought me to, he asked me if I could play any musical instrument, all I had to do was to look yokelish and say no. Then he Svengalied me again and handed me a banjo. I began to rattle off 'The Marriage Bells Are A-Ringing,' and this like to have driven the Council Bluffers in the audience wild with enthusiasm. After I had played a répertoire of banjo music under the hypnotic influence the mesmerist handed me a guitar and asked me if I could do anything with that; this, after he had snapped me out of my banjo-playing trance. I did the sheepish act over again all right, and then, when he had put me into a trance some more and handed me the guitar I went at it and played 'Silvery Waves,' with variations, and then sang 'Down On the Farm,' with accompaniment. Then the mesmerist snapped me awake and I shambled down among the audience and resumed my part of looking opaque and imbecile.

"After the show the mesmerist beamed upon me, told me that I double discounted his chief as-

sistant, handed me a five-dollar bill, and told me that I was engaged for the middle Western and Southern circuit.

"Win out in Council Bluffs? I left Council Bluffs wearing bells and smoking a two-for-a-quarter cigar, and a month later, when our show was down in Little Rock, the oily old mesmerist fired his treasurer and installed me as house-counter, in addition to my duties as assistant fakir. I was with him for five months, and when I quit him in New Orleans to take a job at sheet-writing with a friend of mine who was making a book out at the Crescent City track I had $1,600, all the gig-lamps out of hock, and the sassiest gait of any man within fourteen miles of the Gulf of Mexico.

"Council Bluffs is all right for the variety show knockabout people to abuse, but it's an ace with me."

TALE THE EIGHTEENTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 21 Hurleth a Nosegay in the Direction of ye Chief Ex-Tank

TALE THE EIGHTEENTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 21 HURLETH A NOSEGAY IN THE DIRECTION OF YE CHIEF EX-TANK

"THE last time a bug-ward got me," remarked Ex-Tank No. 18, "was in Milwaukee in the summer of '91. It was my first rap at Milwaukee. Don't remember how I got to Milwaukee from Chicago, but it must have been by freight, on a boat, for when I was turned loose from the bug-ward I found, on assuming the wardrobe that I had on when they got me, that the whole back of my light cutaway coat was an archery target; so I figured it that I must ha' bunked on a coil of greased rope on a boat, for the coat was all right, to the best of my remembrance, the last time I put it on in Chicago.

"When I came to in the ward I noticed the fellow holding down the next bunk on my right grinning at me out of the tail of his eye.

"'Funny, ain't I?' said I sarcastically.

"He was a good-looking chap and he broke into such a chuckle when I spoke that I couldn't help but grin along with him.

"'It's this,' said he, stopping his chuckle for a minute. 'You were solemnly telling me for two hours last night that there was a little devil of a Caliban sitting on the footboard of your bunk and playing the banjo. So when you came to this time I was waiting for you to heave something at the imp,' and he gave me the chuckle again.

"'Don't remember ever having seen you before,' I told him. 'How long you been in?'

"'I pass,' said he. 'Got my head back yesterday morning. The piano-mover in charge of the ward tells me this is Milwaukee. Milwaukee's a new one on me. Chicago's the last I know of it.'

"That struck me as a coincidence. The whole game after Chicago was a vacuum to me.

"'You're from the only town, ain't you?' he asked me. It's a queer thing how one New Yorker knows another wherever he sees him. I knew that that fellow was a New Yorker, too, as soon as I heard him talk.

"'Yep,' I told him. 'So are you,' and he acknowledged it.

"'They'll be turning us loose about this afternoon,' he said. 'Where are you going to went?'

"'Ask me easy ones,' I said to him.

"'Don't you worry,' said he. 'We're on velvet. I've got three dollars. Ward keeper told me

yesterday they found that on me when I came in.'

"Here I was up against a townsman with untold wealth!

"'No more of the red stuff?' said I, inquiringly.

"'Not any,' said he. 'I'm through. The next time I want to see mastodons I'll smoke hop. But no more of the red.'

"As my bunkie predicted, we were turned loose from the bug-ward that afternoon. I got a rebate of $1.95 that had been found on me. Togged out, my bunkie looked all right. My drawback was the coat with the archery target on the back. I replaced that by a half-dollar seersucker coat. Then we went and got shaved. When we got outside the barber shop my pal struck an attitude.

"'Now, here's the situation,' said he deliberately. 'It's now July, and we both want to get back to New York without any telegraphing to the old man or anything like that, by October or November, don't we? All right. It's a case of working our way back, and not on the first car back of the engine, either. I've got to get back with the bells on—I don't play tag and hi spy with myself in New York, but use the rest of the country for that purpose—and so do you. Can see by the cut of your jib that when you go back you want to go back right. Now, neither of us has got the front

to con. people here in Milwaukee to give us the kind of work we can do, and I don't want any more Milwaukee, anyhow. Neither do you. Well, there are two grafts in front of us. We can either take the dough we've got and run up to Oconomowoc or Waukesha, a couple of summer resorts I've heard about around this way, and get jobs hashin'—table waiters are always wanted at summer resorts. That 'ud keep us going until we had a think about the next move. Or we can go out to where the circus performance is being given here—here comes the parade now—and strike 'em for some kind of a job, just to get out of town. Name your choice.'

"'Circus,' said I.

"'You win,' said he, and we got on a car and went out to the circus grounds. Our luck was with us. The circus had got mixed up in a 'Hey, Rube!' battle a couple of towns up the line and a lot of broken-headed tentmen had to be left behind. The boss tentman took us on. He saw that we were both big men and he knew that he'd get work out of us. He did. You bet he did. I had done my quota of win-outs before that, but for a hard game that was the limit. But I thought afterward, and so did my pal, that it was the best thing that could have happened to us. We had to work like

dogs, but the work put us on our feet physically after the damidiocy that had landed us in the Milwaukee bug-ward. Inside of a week after we joined the show we were both as strong as grizzlies and knocking the spots off every layout that came before us in the grub tent. In Madison I ran into a piece of luck. The show was all set and I was snoozing under a flap while the afternoon crowd came in, when a lot of yelling and excitement woke me up. I saw a man running when I got on my feet and a crowd after him. The man being pursued was a pickpocket and he had just pinched a farmer's wallet. I was pretty good at the cross-country game when I was at school back this way and I lit out after the pickpocket. He was good himself, but I wore him down before he had gone three-quarters of a mile. He was all out and so I had no trouble nabbing him. He tried to throw the wallet away without my seeing him, but I got it. By that time the cops were up to us and the farmer whose roll had been pinched. The old jay was so glad to get his money back that he peeled fifty dollars off the big roll inside the pocketbook and handed it to me.

"'We're pretty strong to work,' I said to my pal when I showed him the fifty dollars.

"'We can go into business at an easy graft,' he

replied. He certainly had a head on him. 'The pink lemonade duck had to go to a hospital this morning with the rheumatism. Buy him out and we'll run the peanut and pink lemonade business for the show.'

"I took his tip, chased to the hospital, saw the pink lemonade man and bought his layout for the fifty dollars. The boss tentman was sore about our passing up our jobs with him, but we had somehow or another made a hit with him and he let us go after a few kicks. I peddled the lemonade and the peanuts from behind the stand in the menagerie tent and my pal carried the lemonade around the tent when the show was on. Even after coughing up a big bunch of our daily rake-off to the circus proprietor for the privilege we made good money. I shared the take-in equally with my pal. Both of us actually enjoyed the work. It was pretty hot one night in Peoria, three weeks after we joined the show.

"'Let's just have one proper drink and then turn in,' said I to my pardner. The show was going to exhibit another day in Peoria.

"'Just what I was thinking,' said he, and we did. I had about $120 in my clothes and he had seventy or eighty dollars. That was the finish of our peanut and pink lemonade business. Three

days later, when we woke up in Chicago, we telegraphed to the circus proprietor in East St. Louis about it, and he wired us this reply:

"'You're scratched. Another man has the privilege.'

"By that time we had about thirty dollars left between us.

"'We'll cut out the rum and take a Turkish bath,' said my pardner when the telegram told us that we were out of business. "Then we'll go into the advertising stereopticon business.'

"That was a new proposition on me, but by that time I had a heap of respect for my pal's acumen during his lucid intervals. When we were spread out on the drying couches in the Turkish bath layout he opened up.

"'Among the games which haven't been worked to a finish in this town,' said he, 'are the night pictures on the big boards. I don't know why, but they haven't. I was sober in this town for fully three nights a few months ago, and was all over the downtown region, and I didn't see a single advertising stereopticon working. I'm going to start a plant. We've got about twenty-five dollars, and that'll keep us going until we get this thing running. We've got to spend about a week in conning big merchants to give us their advertising,

and this time we've got front enough to be able to show up before them and give 'em talks. When we get enough advertising to make a showing, we can take our contracts to the carpenter and the painter, and they'll put up three big boards for us on the tops of whatever buildings we get the privilege of using. Likewise, the contracts'll stand off the stereopticon people until the money begins to come in, which will be, in part, when we get the plant rigged and in order. See?'

"'Stop fooling with that hop-toi,' I told him. 'This thing looks too easy.'

"Nevertheless, I didn't really see any reason why the thing shouldn't go through. We got a boarding-house when we left the Turkish bath, and then, we both suddenly remembered that we each had in our clothes a bunch of pawn tickets on stuff that we had soaked in Chicago before we had got to Milwaukee. We thought the tickets could be squeezed some and we were right. He got thirty dollars more on his tickets and I squeezed mine for forty dollars.

"'Let's cut now for New York,' I said to him. 'We've got the price.'

"'Not on your life,' said he. 'I'm going to wear all the stuff these tickets call for when I get into New York.'

"The next day we took separate routes to get stereopticon advertising. We found it something easy. It was a novelty in Chicago then, and we didn't get one turn-down out of five advertisers we struck. Inside of a week we had as much stuff as we could handle on three boards. Then we got the privilege to erect boards and working gear on three of the most prominent buildings in downtown Chicago for a small percentage of the rake-off, and we only had to flash our contracts on the stereopticon people to get three machines and the men to manipulate them.

"We made money hand over fist, got all the gig-lamps out of hock, and were settling down to the affluence of bloated bondholders, all in less than three weeks, when a big wind came up and blew all three of our boards down and wrecked the stereopticons, which we had started to pay for. We were fully $300 to the good, outside of the jewellry we'd redeemed, when this happened.

"Come on, let's go to New York,' said my pardner when we were surveying the wrecks. I agreed, and with all kinds of a front, money and all the other looks of fair-haired boys—just as we intended to be before we started for New York—we took the train. We went by way of Detroit, in a drawing-room car. I don't know how it was

that we didn't happen to get by Detroit, but we didn't. We only took a few on the train, but we woke up in the Russell House in Detroit for all that. We had gone to sleep in the same room with our plug hats on. We woke up about the same time. We both reached for the button simultaneously. Well, it was a pretty swift week after that in Detroit, but it didn't cost us more than $200, so that when we decided to call it off we still had $100 left, nothing in hock and through tickets to New York.

"'A hundred's not enough to land in New York with,' said my pardner. 'We'll have to pick up a few more here.'

"'How we going to do it?' I asked him.

"'Well,' he said, 'when I lost you the other night I got to talking with a busted aeronaut down at the bar. He's got a big balloon, but he isn't good for the price to buy gas to fill it. I've got his address. The Michigan State Fair's going to happen here next week. I'm going to rent that balloon, fill 'er up with gas, tie 'er to a stake out on the fair grounds, have this busted high-flyer run the thing for wages and ride the hayseeds in a captive balloon for a quarter a head. It's a mint. The fair'll last a week and we'll clear up fifty dollars a day, easy. Then we can roll into New

York and tell 'em that we've just been away for a few months buying railroads out West.'

"That went through, too, just as he said it would. Instead, however, of cleaning up fifty dollars a day on a game, we pulled down close to $100 a day, after paying the poor devil of an aeronaut liberally for his end of it. We each had $200 and over in our clothes when, at the wind-up of the State fair, we started for the station to take the New York express. On the way down my pal, passing by a big gin mill, said to me: 'Come on in.'

"I was going to demur, and demur hard, but he gave me a queer look out of the corners of his eyes.

"'Let's have a couple of quart bottles of wine,' said he to the waiter when we sat down at a table.

"The waiter brought them.

"'I just want to give this stuff the laugh for once,' said he, grasping one of the bottles by the base of it. 'It has been giving me the merry hoot for a long time now. It has been man-handling and punishing me for a good twelve years. It has been luring me with a cheap siren song and then pouncing on me with mirthful yelps of victory. Well, here's where I pass it up, not for a while,

but until hell freezes over,' and he deliberately knocked the neck off the bottle and permitted the upturned contents to race and splutter into the spitoon at his side.

"He nodded to me to follow suit, and I did. I was dead willing, for I had some memories, too.

"That's how I got from a bug-ward in Milwaukee to New York in the summer and fall of '91, and all the verification I need for the narrative is the blushing countenance of our respected Chief Ex-Tank, who was—and is—my pardner."

The Chief Ex-Tank rose and bowed amid cheers and the meeting adjourned.

TALE THE NINETEENTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 11 Dwells Upon the Misdirected Zeal of Ye Chicago Sleuth

TALE THE NINETEENTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 11 DWELLS UPON THE MISDIRECTED ZEAL OF YE CHICAGO SLEUTH

"ANYHOW, I needed one so bad that morning," said Ex-Tank No. 11 of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates, "that I got to talking to myself about how bad I needed it.

"'It boots not,' said I to myself, as I walked along Michigan avenue about seven o'clock on a hot sunshiny morning—the World's Fair was only a couple of months old then; 'it doesn't effect the situation at all that I haven't the price of the pint that I need. I'm going to have the pint anyhow. The price is the sordid, squalid end of it, anyway. When a man's in a desert and comes to a spring when he's about to cash in for the want of a drink, does he dig into his clothes to see if he's got the price? Nay, forsooth. I'm in a desert. I won't dig, because I know where I stand without digging. Nevertheless, I'll have the pint.'

"The night before I had blown in my last

eighteen dollars on the Midway. The eighteen dollars was the skeleton of the $800 with which I had struck Chicago two weeks before. It doesn't make any difference where the other $782 went. Here I was on Michigan avenue, at broad daylight, under the hot early morning sun, after having been rudely awakened from a peaceful slumber in the men's waiting-room of the Illinois Central Railroad, minus the price of the pint which I so imperatively required, minus the price even of one of the Chicago washtubs filled with the malt product. I wore a light grey frock suit, with a top hat to match. The remainder of my wardrobe was in a State street hotel, and subject to redemption only upon the payment of heavy salvage.

"'I might,' I reflected, 'go down the bay and do the reliever act with this raiment, that is to say, exchange it for less presumptuous and insistent apparel, and achieve the necessary two dollars for the pint into the bargain. But that would necessitate a walk of some distance, and I decline to walk. I want the pint right now.'

"Wherefore, I walked into the bar of one of the water-front caravansaries. The spick-and-span bartender was just opening up. I approached the bar, patting my vest affectionately and luxuriously.

"'Maurice —' I began.

"'How'd'je guess it?' the barkeep asked me.

"'Maurice,' said I, ponderously, 'have you got a pint of the Widdy, dry, in cold storage, not on ice, but carefully tucked away in the frappé compartment?'

"'It is, yes,' said the barkeep. 'You must've spent the night over the dope sheets. That's two winners you've picked already.'

"'The pint is mine,' said I. 'Decant it.'

"Say, who was the thirsty guy who wrote about blushful hippocrene? He must have been jostled awake in the men's waiting-room of the Illinois Central Railroad in Chicago, at seven o'clock on a hot, sunshiny morning, after two weeks of the mazarine daze, minus the price; otherwise he couldn't have been so wise to the meaning of a thirst. That pint marked an epoch in my career. Never, before or since—oh, well, I wake up in the middle of the night, yet, and catch the bouquet of that pint.

"'You have the mate to this one, too, haven't you, Maurice?' I asked the barkeep.

"'The whole family,' said he, and he opened me another pint. It was great, that pint, too, but the first was the ever-memorable baby.

"'Well,' said I to myself, after I'd got away with the last of the number two pint, 'here's where

I get the bung starter or the arm clutch. But it was worth the money.'

"'Just charge it up to Hogan,' said I, jauntily, to the barkeep. 'Put the check on ice.'

"'Sure,' said the barkeep, and then I needed digitalis. I'd been fixing to dodge beneath the bar, and he said 'Sure.' I looked him in the eye for a minute. I couldn't exactly understand it.

"'What for th' rubberin'?' he asked me.

"'Your complaisancy overwhelms me,' said I. 'How do you know you'll ever shake hands with that four dollars?'

"'Oh, you've bought enough basketfuls here, pal, to make you good for the fixtures if you want 'em,' said the barkeep. 'What's the matter; were you sitting into an all-kitty game last night?'

"Then I started out, refreshed, but wondering much. I hadn't got out the hotel door before I felt a gentle tap on my left shoulder. I wheeled around and gazed into the lamps of a cool-looking chap.

"'Hello, Burnham,' said he. 'Trying to bluff it out, hey? Where were you keeping yourself yesterday? I tried all the covers, but you were nix. Of course you don't know anything about the job, hey, chum? But it had all your thumb-

prints, at that. I guess you were there or thereabouts. Come on around, and I'll talk to you.'

"'Say,' said I to the cool-looking duck, 'you need rest and quiet. Burnham? Is that the first name you thought of?'

"'Ho! you're springing American dialect, hey, George? Cut out your English drawl, I see. Well, you won't do. Come on, now. Don't try to mix me. I'm too educated.'

"I was a bit warm by this time.

"'Look here, my friend,' said I, 'what the devil are you talking about, and who the devil do you take me for?'

"Darned if he didn't put his hands to his sides and holler. I started to walk away in disgust. Then I felt a grip on my right arm that would have hauled an ice wagon.

"'Oh, no, Georgy, don't go away,' said the cool-looking proposition. 'It's too early in the morning to play tag, anyhow. Come on around, and you can begin to patch up your alibi when we get there.'

"Well, ten minutes later I was sitting on a bench in a cell at the Harrison Street Station, and spending mentally the $100,000 for which I was going to sue the city of Chicago for false imprisonment. I was down on the books of the Harrison

Street Station as George Burnham, English second-story man, charged with pinching $4,000 worth of diamonds and other precious stones at a swell Prairie avenue plant, a couple of evenings before, while the family were at dinner.

"'But you and this gum-shoe sleuth of yours are up in the air,' I said to the desk sergeant when I was hauled into the station. 'You're ballooning without ballast. I'm no George Burnham, nor George anything else. I'm a New York idiot who came out here to see the World's Fair. The only thing I know about second-story men is what Mr. Byrnes of our little old town published on that subject in his book. I don't like to have people get so giddy with me.'

"'Pretty good switch he's made in his accent, hey, sergeant?' the detective asked the sergeant. 'Got it down pretty pat, hasn't he? But you won't do, George,' addressing me. 'I'll just hunt through you some and show you up to yourself.'

"Then he searched me. I didn't have a scrap of paper in my clothes, nor anything else.

"'Did a strip act, and thought you'd bluff it out, eh, George?' said the detective, amiably. 'Oh, well, it was your job, all O. K., and you're too good an old lag not to be next to the fact that I can hitch it on to you.'

"When I protested to the sergeant that my arrest was an outrage, and only got the hoot, I knew there was no use trying to make a rough-house of it, with a whole brigade of Swede cops sleeping upstairs. So I decided to take it as it came. I was sleepy, anyhow, and I thought I might as well take a little nap in a cell as anywhere else. So I sat on the bench in the cell for a while, wondering what New York lawyer I'd send for to enter suit against Cook county for unjustifiable pinching, when I rolled over and went to sleep.

"I don't know how long I slept, but it must have been quite a while. I woke up suddenly to the music of hoarse laughter, and there was my doppelganger standing before me, grinning, with the desk sergeant and the sleuth who had arrested me right behind him, chuckling.

"'Well, if they ain't ringers for each other you can give me the boots,' the detective was saying, and they looked at each other wonderingly. They looked at each other only about a sixteenth of a second, but it was long enough. The man who looked like me—his resemblance to me honestly was something scandalous, and he had my make-up to a T—, frock grey suit, top hat to match, and all, the man who looked like me slipped off his right cuff with the quickness of thought and let it

fall gently into my hat, that was lying, bottom up, on the bench beside me. He kept right on grinning at me all the time. Neither of the officers saw the move he made with the cuff.

"'Blimed 'f th' cove don't tike after me,' said Mr. George Burnham, for he was George, all right. 'Only he cawn't be called so bloomin' good-lookin' as I am.'

"The desk-sergeant turned me loose with a whole lot of apologies then and there.

"'Case of mistaken identity, sir,' he said, 'that would fool the best of us; most remarkable case of ringers I ever saw in my whole service. Trust you're not going to make a ruction of it?'

"'Well,' I told him, 'I could use a million dollars or so just now, and this town's as good to get it out of as any other.'

"Then I picked up my grey top hat, with Mr. George Burnham's cuff still in it, put it on my head, and walked out. There's nothing doing in the way of damages for false imprisonment out in Chicago, for all the citizens are pinched out there at least once in their lives on suspicion of being footpads, and I knew that I'd have to take my soreness out in growling to myself for being yanked into a cell for a second-story man. But if I hadn't made some such a bluff to the sergeant and the de-

tective they might have thought I was a crook, sure enough.

"It was night when I was turned loose, and I walked around aimlessly, feeling pretty hollow and parched. It was up to me to get out of Chicago and back to New York some old way. I paddled around, keeping awake with difficulty, on the streets of Chicago all that night, and the next morning I got a job as a barker on South State street. A smooth geezer from this little place was exhibiting a very much altogether painting of 'Fatima, the Odalisque,' and I met up with him in front of the shack where he was showing the picture for a quarter a throw. I had certain evidences of being up against it printed on me, and he engaged me to bark for the painting at the rate of ten dollars per week, with two dollars in advance for immediate needs. All I had to do was to walk up and down in front of the place, say 'See the beauteous Fatima inside,' in a deep bass voice, every three seconds, and point inside with a bamboo cane. Nice graft, eh? But I needed the price of a scalped ticket to New York, and I'd have carried the hod to get it.

"I hadn't had my hat off since leaving the Harrison Street station, but it was pretty warm work barking for Fatima, and after I'd been on duty for

an hour or so I reached up and pulled off my lid so's I could mop my forehead. As I pulled off the hat, Mr. George Burnham's cuff, that I had forgotten all about, fell to the sidewalk. I picked it up, and saw that it had a pencilled scrawl on it, that read:

"'Tell Tuck Rigley, No. ——, Custom House Place, that the stuff is salted as usual. G. B.'

"'Well,' said I to myself, 'I may get down to barking for Fatima, but I guess I can get along without knowing Tuck Rigley, whatever the dickens kind of a crook he may be; and if I gave him this I'd be an accessory after the fact in the second story game myself.'

"Then I rammed the cuff into my pocket and went on telling 'em what a bird Fatima, inside, was. Ten minutes later a pretty well-togged chap came along, swinging a cane, and I noticed that when he got his eyes on me he started visibly, and then walked around me and took me in from various points of view.

"'You must like me, Bill,' said I, and he grinned when he heard my voice, which he'd only heard before in basso praise of the beauties of Fatima.

"'Your th' spit o' one o' me pals, that's all,' said the chap with a cockney burr in his speech.

"'Who? George Burnham?' I asked him.

"He gave me the eye then for fair.

"'George,' said I, 'if he's the one you mean, is cooling off at the Harrison Street station.'

"'So I heard,' said the chap, still eyeing me shrewdly. There's no doubt in life that he thought me a crook.

"'D'ye happen to know a friend of his named Rigley—Tuck Rigley?' I asked him, just out of curiosity.

"'That's me,' said the fellow. 'Say, what's your lay?' he inquired, coming closer to me.

"A sudden impulse guided my hand into my pocket, and I pulled out the cuff with the writing on it and handed it to Rigley, telling him in a few words how I happened to get it. The thing was addressed to the man, I figured, and it wasn't particularly up to me to withhold it from him.

"'Blow me if you ain't all right,' said Mr. Rigley, 'and you'll get your bit for this.'

"'Say, look-a-here,' I started to say to him, 'I want you to understand that I'm not—' but Mr. Rigley had by that time stuffed the cuff into his pocket and was tramping down the street as fast as his legs would carry him, swinging his cane jauntily.

"Then I resumed my barking for Fatima, feel-

ing somehow or another, as if my picture ought to be in the Rogues' Gallery if it wasn't.

"I was still hoarsely praising Fatima at five o'clock on that sizzling hot afternoon when a messenger boy on a bike rode up to the curb and dismounted. Then he took an envelope out of his cap and handed it to me.

"'What's this?' I asked him.

"'Gentleman down at the corner of Dearborn and Madison streets told me to give it to you,' said the messenger.

"'But it's got no name on it,' said I.

"'No,' said the boy, 'but he told me what you looked like.'

"I opened the envelope. A nice, new $500 bill fell out first, and then a scrawl on a telegraph blank.

"'Here's your bit,' the scrawl read. 'I found the plant, fenced it, and have left enough behind for George's lawyer. They're after me, and I'm drilling away from this. T. R.'

"Well, there was no way of sending it back, was there? He was gone. So was I, three hours later. But every time I read of a second-story-man I shudder guiltily, and can feel a hefty paw on my shoulder."

TALE THE TWENTIETH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 3 Endeavoreth to Convey an Idea of the Misery of Awakening in ye Bug-Ward

TALE THE TWENTIETH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 3 ENDEAVORETH TO CONVEY AN IDEA OF THE MISERY OF AWAKENING IN YE BUG-WARD

"ONE morning I turned over drowsily and woke up in a bug-ward that I couldn't exactly place," said Ex-Tank No. 3, the Secretary of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates. "Before I had a chance to look around and try to study the thing out, I found myself fixed by the gaze of the man in the bunk on my right. He was resting on his left side, with his head in his hand, and he was regarding me with a curious grin. Maybe it was his steady gaze that woke me up; I've often seen people awakened out of a sound sleep that way. This man in the bunk on my right had a big, good-natured, smooth-shaven face and twinkling Irish eyes. His grin deepened when he saw that I was awake. I wasn't feeling cheerful.

"'Glad situation, ain't it?' said I, sarcastically.

"'Kind o',' he replied, still grinning.

"I looked around the bug-ward wonderingly.

"'Is it a new one on you?' asked the good-na-

tured chap in the bunk on my right. 'If it isn't, put me next to where it is, what town it's in, and a little stuff like that.'

"'Search me,' said I. 'I am in-no-cent. Don't you remember breaking in?'

"'Nope,' said the man with the twinkling Irish eyes. 'Don't remember anything. If this zebra-shack's in Chicago, then it's one that I've missed. Don't you recall when you butted in here?'

"'Nay, belike, sorry the day,' said I.

"'Just touch that button there and we'll have a couple of those things with cherries in 'em,' said my bunkmate facetiously.

"'Is Chicago the last you remember of it?' I asked him.

"'Yep,' said he. 'Last thing I remember before I got into this hop-trance was shaking dice for pints at the Auditorium bar. This outfit may be in Chicago, for all I know. Don't remember leaving Chicago, anyhow.'

"'Same here,' said I. 'Last thing that stands out in my recollection is matching quarters for high-balls in the House of David.'

"Just then a big bruiser of an Irish attendant sauntered by.

"'Hey, there, Hugo,' said the man in the bunk on my right, calling after the Mulligan attendant,

'tip us off on the name of the cave and the town it's in, will you? We're twisted.'

"'Oh, yees two Injuns has come to, has yees?' said the wardman, wheeling around and walking up to our bunks. 'This is th' dizzy-ward o' th' Moonisippal Hoshpit'l o' St. Paul, if yees wants t' know, an' th' divil's own pair yees are, t' say th' laste.'

"'St. Paul, hey?' said the man in the bunk on my right, wonderingly. 'Now, how the devil did I get to St. Paul, I'd like to know?'

"'Hand me an easy one,' said I. 'The same one's got me going about how I did it myself.'

"'How long have I been in here, Mike?' asked my bunkmate of the wardman.

"'Two days, ye and yees pardner,' said the Mulligan, indicating me with a nod of his head when he said 'pardner.'

"'Why, did the two of us land here in a bunch? Was it a dead heat?' asked my bunkmate.

"'Yees finished roight on th' wire t'gither,' said the wardman. 'Yees came here in a cab t'gither, an' no cop along wid yees. Yees must ha' made up yees moinds at wan an' th' same toime t' bale yeezselves out.'

"Then the Mulligan wardman went along about his business.

"'So we landed here linked-arms,' said my bunkmate. 'Queer deal, ain't it?'

"'May have met on the train,' said I. 'May have run into each other in Chicago, for that matter. The game now's to get out.'

"'They won't stand for it,' said my bunkmate. 'They'll hang on to us for a week, anyway.'

"Just then the young doctor in charge of the ward came in. Seeing us awake and engaged in conversation, he walked over to our bunks.

"'Oh, you two have got around, have you?' said the young doctor. 'How do you both feel?'

"'Well, speaking for myself, I've got a hunch to go home,' replied my bunkmate.

"'The same dog's biting me,' said I.

"'Impossible!' said the young doctor. 'You're both in a condition of prostration. If I were to turn you loose now, you'd both be back here before night.'

"'Well, you don't want to stand to go broke on that proposition,' said the man in the right-hand bunk. 'Henceforth and forever I abjure the Flagon.'

"'I won't take a drink out of a Pompeiian tear-jar as long as I live,' said I.

"'Oh, I've heard that kind of stuff before,' said the young doctor, jauntily. 'If I signed your re-

lease, the both of you'd be spiflicated by noon, and then when you came back the Super would hound me for letting you go.'

"Well, we both started in to con that young man, and we make it stick.

"'You both belong in Chicago, you say?' asked the young doctor, yieldingly. 'Well, that's a long walk from St. Paul. I think there were seventeen cents between you when you got in.'

"'Touched, all right,' said my bunkmate and I, together.

"Well, anyhow, we got out all right by noon. When I saw my bunkmate togged out he proved to be dressy and a good-looker. I had a front of my own at that. The young doctor had underestimated our joint wealth. I had eighty-five cents in change, and my bunkmate had twenty-eight cents. I blew him off to an ammonia cocktail at the first drug store we came to, and then said he:

"'How about the ride to Chicago?'

"'Lemme have a pencil and I'll try a scheme,' said I, and we went to the writing-room of a hotel. I dug for an hour, and at the end of that time I'd written a rollicking, rolling song called 'Riding on the C., M. & St. P.' It set forth attractively the advantages of travelling on that line of railroad. I showed it to my pal, and hummed it over for him.

Then we hummed it together. Then we took it to the St. Paul agent of the C., M. & St. P.

"'Here,' said I to the agent, 'is the chance of your life to be made general manager of your line.'

"Then my pal and I lined up together and sang 'Riding on the C., M. & St. P.' for the agent.

"'Now, all you've got to do, in order to make such a hit with the board of directors that they can't hold you down,' said I to the agent, 'is to have, say, 25,000 copies of this song printed and distributed free, as advertising matter. That'll enable the road to declare an extra three per cent. dividend inside of a month, and you'll be hailed and applauded by the stockholders as a genius. You can tell them you wrote the song yourself. All this fame and glory and advancement to accrue to you for two little passes over your line from here to Chicago. See? Great idea, hey?'

"The agent handed us the polaric eye, and we faded out into the nippy, frosty street.

"I changed the song a bit so's to adapt it to another road that ran to Chicago, and we took it to the agent of that line and hummed it for him. He, too, passed us the Antarctic stare, and we found ourselves out in the eager air.

"We went to the barber shop to get shaved and

think it over. It was a hotel barber shop. The man who had the chair next to mine was beefing to his barber about the lack of shorthand and typewriting facilities around the hotel.

"'It's a jay outfit, right,' he was saying. 'I've got twenty letters to get off in the next mail, and not a darned key-puncher around the place.'

"I cut in right there.

"'You can dictate 'em to me,' I said to the man, 'and I'll dig up a machine somewhere and transcribe the notes.'

"'I'll go you,' said the man, and when I had my shave I went up to the writing-room within, and he dictated his letters to me. I went to a typewriter agency, and, on pretext of trying the different machines, ran off the letters in an hour, telling them that I'd reserve decision as to which machine I'd select. The man I did the work for handed me a ten-dollar note, which I showed gloatingly to my pal, who was waiting for me.

"'Well,' said he, 'it's not up to you to do all of the hustling. I guess I'd better run out and tackle a turn at carrying the hod.'

"'Wait'll I run this button up to a billion,' I said. 'You stay here in the writing-room and keep warm.'

"I noticed my ex-bunkmate of the bug-ward

looking at me shrewdly out of the tail of his eye, and I was rather tickled to have a chance to exhibit my hustling abilities before him.

"'You've done some winning-out before, chum,' said he, eyeing me craftily.

"Henry Irving was playing in St. Paul that night. I hustled down to the box office. There was a line in front of the window about a block long. I skinned up the line, beginning at the rear, and quietly suggested to a lot of the swell ducks that were shivering and stamping their feet—some of 'em had been in line for hours—that I could get 'em their seats inside of five minutes for a bonus. I picked up fourteen customers. I made a list of the number each wanted, and where, and they handed me their money freely. I hustled into the box office and tackled the manager.

"'I'm the Board of Aldermen's messenger,' said I to him, 'and they've sent me down with a list of the seats they want. Can you dig 'em up before the good ones are all gone?'

"It went with a whoop. The manager was only too tickled to oblige the Board of Aldermen. I got the seats, turned 'em over to my people in the line, and yanked out two dollars on each deal, which made twenty-eight dollars. That made me thirty-eight to the good altogether.

"I could see that there weren't going to be half enough seats for the people who wanted to see the Irving show, and so, with the thirty-eight dollars I hustled back to the box office and shot one into the manager about being delegated by the City Hall employees to get them seats, too. He sort o' passed me the searching look then, and I prepared to edge out backward when I saw him making a move toward the telephone. But he reconsidered it, and gave me nineteen good balcony seats for two dollars per. I took 'em to where my ex-bunkmate was waiting for me and told him of the wealth in prospect.

"'It's too good to go through,' said he. 'You'll fall out of bed and bump your head in a minute.'

"Well, at four o'clock that afternoon the box-office people turned the box on the big line of people still standing in front, waiting for a chance to buy tickets, and the 'No More Seats' sign was hung out. I was right there at the time, and it was like taking a candy cane from an infant to pass up and down the line and offer to purvey my two dollar balcony seats to the disappointed bunch for five dollars a throw. They ate 'em up at that figure, and I cleaned up fifty-seven dollars on the job. That made me ninety-five dollars strong, and

Chicago was right across the street for my ex-bunkmate and me.

"I flashed the roll on him in the writing-room of the hotel where he'd been waiting just when the shades of early dusk were falling.

"'We'll take a mild eat,' said I, 'get in a night's sleep, and join the varnished-car-caravan Chicago-ward to-morrow morning. When we get to Chicago we can respectively find out why and how we ever left there.'

"'Say,' said my bunkmate of the bug-ward when we were at the table in the hotel supper room, 'what I want to know is, Where do I cut into that wad you've picked up so scientifically? You don't know me. I've got no claim on you. How do you happen to count me in on this ride back to Chicago? I've done none of the hustling. I don't know how to hustle that way. Consequently, why should I let you pick me up on your shoulders and pack me back to Chicago?'

"'No reason, particularly,' said I, 'except that you speak the language of my tribe, that you're the same sort of an irresponsible idiot that I am, and that you're up against it. Isn't that enough? I'd want you to do as much for me if the conditions were reversed. I don't believe you've been joggled and jolted around as much as I've been,

otherwise you'd see how and why it's up to me, as your ex-bunkmate of a bug-ward, to see you back to your base of operations, both of us having been turned loose in company at one and the same time. See?'

"'Oh, you'll do,' said my pal, looking at me in the peculiar way I'd noticed during the afternoon.

"The next morning we took the train for Chicago.

"'Well,' said I to my ex-bunkmate when we pulled into the station in Chicago, 'here's where we break apart. I suppose you're going home? I am.'

"As a matter of fact, I didn't have any home to go to; but I didn't care to own up to that.

"'Hope I'll run in with you some other time,' I wound up, at the same time trying to slip him a ten-spot.

"He looked at me, and then at the ten, and smiled.

"'Let's get into a cab and take a little ride first,' said he, hustling me into a roller. Then he ordered the cabman to drive to the swellest club in Chicago. I was mystified, and looked him over to see if he was all there.

"'You'll be waking up presently,' I said.

"'Oh, I guess I haven't been expelled,' said he,

coolly, and then the cab pulled up before the club. We went in. Twenty swell geezers were around my bunkmate of the bug-ward in half a minute, shaking hands with him, asking him where he'd been, and making much of him. It got me going. Then he introduced me to the whole mob as his old friend and guest. Then he went to the club treasurer and had a personal check for $500 cashed. This he handed to me.

"'You'll do all right,' said he, with a smile. 'Make a raid on the haberdashers in the morning, get out what stuff you've got in, and come around to my office about noon,' handing me his business card, that of a building contractor, with offices in the topnotch office building of Chicago.

"Well, I did see him at his office at noon the next day. He certainly was a Prince Charlie to me. He was worth about a million, that's all, and he put me on his staff as his confidential man.

"'I've needed a resourceful, hustling man in my business for some time, and you're It,' said he, while I tried to hide my blushes behind my hat.

"'Why didn't you make the wires sizzle when you were broke in St. Paul day before yesterday?' I asked him.

"'There was too much fun in studying the win-

out methods adopted by a man just turned loose from a bug-ward,' he said.

"That's when I became good and learned the building contract business," concluded Ex-Tank No. 3.

TALE THE TWENTY-FIRST

In Which Ex-Tank No. 11 Relateth How he Annihilated the Distance over ye Rocky Mountains

TALE THE TWENTY-FIRST

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 11 RELATETH HOW HE ANNIHILATED THE DISTANCE OVER YE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

"In order to get from San Francisco to Chicago, said Ex-Tank No. 17, "you have first got to raise the price of a ride on the ferry over to Oakland, where all caravans bound for the land of the rising sun are formed. Well, I got over to Oakland without swimming. I waited until quite a crowd had formed around the ferry gate on the San Francisco side, and when the gate was thrown open, and the ticket-taker had begun business, I joggled my way through the bunch, holding up a handkerchief.

"'Hey!' I yelled after an imaginary guy who had suppositiously passed the ticket-taker, 'you've dropped your mouchoir, old man; just stay where you are and I'll hand it to you.'

"The ticket-taker didn't have time to look around for the purpose of spotting the man who hadn't dropped any handkerchief, and he passed me through the gate, naturally, without demanding any

ticket, supposing that as soon as I'd returned the dropped handkerchief to the owner thereof I'd come right back outside the gate. But I didn't come back. I went right aboard the ferryboat and mingled with the madding throng. For, in setting out from San Francisco for Chicago you've got to get to Oakland first.

"This was along toward five o'clock on a benign May afternoon, six years ago. I had been mingling in scenes of tumult in San Francisco for some three months. No Eastern man may mingle in scenes of San Francisco tumult for three months and retain, at the finish, the wherewithal for a ride across the mountains to this side. He must either have on his staff San Francisco bankers who will honor his draft, or sympathetic relatives on this side of the Divide who will make good in response to his telegrams, charges collect. Otherwise, he must—— Well, any way, there I was, on the Oakland side, filled with a deep ardor to get back to Chicago.

"I walked into the station where the caravans are formed for the East, and engaged in a line of sombre thinks. The *leit motif* of my thinks was this: 'To get back to Chicago without a ticket, without walking, and without recourse to the side-door Pullmans.'

"There was a large gang of Regular Army soldiers in the station waiting for a train to be made up. The gang was composed of four heavy batteries of an artillery regiment, about to make the shift from the Presidio of San Francisco to an Atlantic station. Three-fifths of them were already pretty comfortable, thanks, with bottles hid away in their knapsacks, and these were practically under guard of the other two-fifths.

"'I'd like to be a soldier,' I hummed, thinking of the fatherly way Uncle Sam has of transporting his troops.

"'The hell you would!' said a voice in my ear. I turned around and perceived that the voice belonged to a soldier who was more than moderately soused.

"'Well,' said I to him, 'just until this train that you fellows are taking reached the East, I'd like to be a soldier.'

"'Say,' said the soldier, dropping his tone, and beckoning me over to a corner of the men's smoking-room of the station, 'maybe me and you can do some business. D'je say that you wanted to get back East?"

"'Well,' said I, 'I'd ship as a sailor on an airship, if I knew of one that was going to start East.'

"'Well, t'ell with the snow shovellers back East is my maxim,' said this queer soldier. 'I'm a sloper, and I'm glad of it, and I don't want to go East, and the beauty of it is that I ain't a-going East if I can jump the outfit. Say, I'll trade you clothes.'

"'For why?' I asked him.

"'You ain't so wise as you look,' said the soldier with the skate, talking right close to my ear. 'If you're so dead stuck on getting back East, you can take my place, see? I'm a rookie, and when I joined this outfit at the Presidio I didn't figure on 'em sending me East. T'ell with the East. I buck when it comes to going East. And I'm going to jump the outfit right here. Trade me togs, and you can slip in with the bunch and go along as a buck private in the regular army. They'll not get next in the shuffle, not till you've made a good piece of the trip, anyhow, and when they do get wise that you ain't me, they can't do no more than ditch you. Are you on?'

"Well, it was a chance, anyhow. I slipped out of the station with the soldier, and we went across the street to a dive and traded clothes.

"'Your name's McGinley in C Battery, understand?' said the soldier who was about to desert, after we'd effected the exchange of raiment. 'But

nobody'll ask your name, at that. There ain't no roll calls to be answered. S'long, pal. You can have all the darned snow shovelling back East you want. Old San Fran's good enough for me.'

"Then he faded from my view. A friend of mine at Department Headquarters in Chicago afterward told me that McGinley had been collared for desertion on the day following the departure of the batteries from Oakland, and that he was nailed for a two-year term on Alcatraz Island. McGinley struck me as being an amiable and yet a determined cuss, but his prejudice against the East was his undoing.

"I went back to the station and joined the bunch of soldiers who had the letter 'C' over their cross-cannons. I am naturally clannish, and I wanted to mingle with my own outfit. I noticed 'em looking at me peculiarly—the privates, that is. The officers and non-commissioned officers were all too busy to notice me. I kept my—McGinley's—campaign hat pretty well pulled over my eyes, anyhow. I fell in with the 'C' battery crowd when the order to march to the tourist sleepers was given, taking up an obscure position 'way behind, and by that time the shades of night had descended. There were five tourist sleepers for the soldiers, and the berths were made up im-

mediately all hands were embarked. Contrary to McGinley's prediction, the roll was called as soon as the men got aboard the train. A sergeant stood at the door of the car 'C' battery was on and called out the names. I 'stood by' for him to reach the Ms, and when he called out 'McGinley,' 'Here,' said I, in the perkiest way you ever heard.

"That put the members of 'C' battery next to me. When I crawled into my bunk, after the train was under way, a fellow in a bunk across the aisle stuck his head out between the curtains.

"'Say, has McGinley jumped?' he asked me in a hoarse whisper.

"'I am McGinley,' said I, frivolously, and I heard a lot of subdued chuckles from the other bunks. I was all right with them. They wouldn't have spieled a line under any circumstances. But the next morning, when reveille was sounded in the car, and we got into uniform, the top sergeant of 'C' battery nailed me. He looked me over a couple of times—this was just when the train was about to pull into Mojave—and he came over close to where I was sitting and said in a low tone:

"'McGinley, hey? I'm sorry, son; but it won't do.'

"'I don't think so myself,' said I.

"'And it's liable to get me into trouble, at that,' said the sergeant. 'I reported McGinley present and accounted for at roll call last night, before the train started. But I can explain that by claiming that McGinley hopped off at some stop during the night. You'd better jump off here at Mojave. The officer in charge of the battery might collar you for being in possession of a deserter's uniform, or something like that.'

"And so, when the train pulled into Mojave, I slid off, and stayed off, until the train was under way again. The best I did by switching togs with a buck soldier was to get ditched at Mojave, Cal., and, all in all, it is solacing now to reflect that McGinley had to do his two years at Alcatraz Island.

"Mojave, Cal., is just a nightmareish mirage. It is planted between a lot of dwarfed mountains that are yellow all the year around, and the whole aspect around Mojave is that of a portion of the earth that the lightning of heaven has a habit of striking and stripping bare several times a day. The country around Mojave looks riven and scarred, and the never-ceasing wind moans threnodies in your ears from first call in the morning until taps at night, and then right on until first call again. Mojave consists of a shack station, an eat-

ing-place attached thereto, and about a dozen hontatonks across the street. However, there I was in Mojave—the soldiers, referring to the railroad maps, had called it Mojayve—in a buck artilleryman's uniform, with a hopeless number of leagues of mountain and plain intervening between me and Chicago.

"'This,' said I to myself, as I stood behind the eating-house, keeping out of sight until the train had started, 'is the limit. This is where I cash in for keeps. There's no way out of this. This is the real thing, and I don't care a ——'

"'Well, I'll be damned!' said a voice behind me.

"I wheeled around, and there was a fellow that I had played marbles and shinny with back in this part of the world. He had a sombrero on the back of his head, his hands were jammed into his pockets, and he was smoking a cigar. I hadn't seen him for four years, and there he was. He handed me the cordial mitt.

"'D'je get left?' he inquired, nodding in the direction of the disappearing train.

"'Well, not exactly in the way you might imagine if you're judging from this Little Boy Blue makeup,' I told him, and then I handed him the story of my début in Mojave. He himself had

gone broke in Los Angeles the month before, and had met up with the owner of a string of railroad eating-houses, including the one at Mojave. He'd got the job of managing the Mojave eating-house, and he was It in Mojave.

"'But it's not much more than a board-and-keep graft for me,' he said, 'and I don't know how I can send you along up the line to Chicago. S'pose you stay along and hash for me until something turns up. I've got a Chink now to take care of the lunch room. I'll fire him and you can have the job—thirty a month and keep. And something may happen to give you a lift up to Windville.'

"I took the job. It was like manna from above, at that. My former pal, the manager of the eating-house, passed me a suit of his togs, and I sold the soldier clothes to a teamster for two dollars, which was more money than I thought there was in the state of California since I'd gone broke in San Francisco. I dished up the truck to the hungry bunches that rushed in when the trains came along—not many trains hesitated at Mojave, at that—and it was a pretty good job. I figured on saving all of my thirty per for a ticket back to Chicago after a couple of months' work at hashing. But I didn't need to.

"About ten days after I'd hit Mojave, a jagged cockney got off the morning train that came in from Los Angeles. He had come to meet the San Francisco train, east bound. He was a servant on the staff of a Chicago packer whose name you all know, and he was to take charge, at Mojave, of five foxhounds that were due on the train from San Francisco, and take care of 'em for the remainder of the journey to Chicago. The cockney had apparently begun to load up as soon as he got aboard the train at Los Angeles, and when he got off at Mojave he was talkative and blustery. He told me all about those fox'ounds, 'ow they were travelling in the express car, 'ow he was going to travel on the same train—in a first-rite Pullman, moind ye—with the dogs, and only 'ad to see that they were fed hand watered on the way, and so on. Then he corned up a lot more while he waited for the train to arrive from San Francisco with the dogs relegated to his keeping during the trip across the continent. He was google-eyed and spiflicated, and sleeping in a room over the eating-house, all out to the last ounce, when the station operator got the signal that the train from San Francisco was only a few miles away. My friend the boss of the eating-house had heard the cockney's spiel about the dogs, and he came to me in the lunch room.

"'Well, s'long, old chap,' said he. 'Hope you'll have a nice ride. Give my regards to the gang in Chicago.'

"'Not so fierce, not so fierce,' said I. 'How and when am I going to get to Chicago?'

"'Well, you're going to take those dogs, ain't you?' he said, tipping me the wink. 'That cockney's paralyzed upstairs, and he won't jolt himself awake for twelve hours. Meanwhile, you're the man that's supposed to be waiting here to hitch on to the train and take charge of those dogs. See? Just load yourself a bushel-basket full of grub for the trip, and here's a ten-spot for your work here. When the train pulls in, and the man in charge of the express car looks around for the man who's to assume control of those dogs, you're the boy, that's all.'

"The train pulled in, and the man in charge of the express car was the first to jump off and gallop into the station.

"'Say,' he asked, 'is there a man here that's going to take charge of those darned dogs?'

"'Yep,' said I. 'I'm the geezer. Just gimme a lift with this basket-full of grub for 'em, will you?'

"Just then the conductor came up.

"'You're the man that's to join those hounds,

eh?' he said. 'Well, here's your ticket and your berth check,' and he handed 'em to me.

"'Be good, chum,' said my friend the manager of the eating-house, shaking hands with me as the train was about to pull out. 'You're good now for a through trip. I'll take care of the cockney if he makes any belch.'

"Five days later I pulled into Chicago, and I'd made such a mash on those five fine foxhounds, by spending a lot of time in the car with them and fooling with them, that they declined to have anything to do with anybody else. I was in a quandary, however, before the train got into the Chicago station, as to what I'd do with the dogs—how I'd get them to the packer to whom they were consigned without having to exude a lot of embarrassing explanations. I had decided to load them in a wagon and just send them out, without any word, to the packer's residence in the suburbs of Chicago. I was in the express car with the dogs when the train got in. As soon as the door of the car was opened, a good-looking, well-groomed, elderly man with grey side-whiskers stuck his head in.

"'Ah, there they are,' said he.

"I recognized him instantly as the packer to whom the dogs belonged. He'd often been mugged for the picture papers.

"'Yes,' said I, coming forward out of the darkness of the car, 'here they are, sir.'

"'Why, you're not James,' said he, looking at me surprisedly.

"'No, but I needed the ride,' said I, and then I told him how it was that I, and not his Jeems, was convoying his dogs.

"'Well, I'll be dummed if that wasn't a cool bit of work,' said the packer. 'Left him drunk in Mojave, Cal., you say? Well, I'm lucky to have my dogs back here, in good shape, although the transaction wasn't exactly—er—regular, now, was it? However, I'm much obliged,' and the fifty dollar note that he passed me enabled me to promenade the old fresh-water front that evening with a real impudent look of prosperity sticking out all over me.

"But I had a lot of luck on that cruise. Under non-fortuitous circumstances, the hike between San Francisco and Chicago is liable to be one of ennui and depression for the man who hasn't got the pasteboard."

TALE THE TWENTY-SECOND

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 18 Discourseth Warningly on the Insidiousness of ye Gambling Bug

TALE THE TWENTY-SECOND

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 18 DISCOURSETH WARNINGLY ON THE INSIDIOUSNESS OF YE GAMBLING BUG

"THE gambling bug," remarked No. 18, "is a buzzier proposition than either rum or dope. It develops wheels within wheels under the hat. It's a hard bug to shake off. It belongs to the clinchicus variety, and it's a stayer from No Man's Land. It generates the fever and then the cold sweat. Pretty often it saps a man's nerve and breaks his heart. Take the horse bug, for example. A man who lets the horse bug get into his lid isn't fit for work. He eats, drinks and dreams horse. I had such a big horse bug once that I dreamed every night of some skate or other that was inevitably beaten a lap for third money. The way I worked in my dreams to get those plugs I was riding over the plate among the first three is a bother to think of now. I was going to say, in mentioning work, that a man with the rum bug alone can make a bluff at holding down his job. It

comes hard work, after a swift night; yet the practiced rummerino goes at it and gets through with it somehow. But the man with a mature, healthy horse bug can't work at all. He wants to know how they are running, if his picks are going through. He hankers to see 'em chafing to get away from the pump and the 'They're off!' shout is the sweetest music he knows. There are plenty of pinheads in this town to-day who, long ago smashed and put out of business through the instrumentality of the horse bug, hang around the poolrooms just to hear the races called off by the operators. When their picks go through they snap their fingers and root as if they stood to win it all back, although they haven't even got a bet down in a ten-cent handbook. The horse bug is a lulu as a long-distance goer, all right. None of the gambling bugs, in fact, is a mere sprinter. They all last a route.

"Well, when you get the gambling bug in combination with the rum bug, you're in trouble and plenty of it. They play one against the other, and they've got possession. You're never it. You make a winning and the rum bug hauls down the pot. You decide to eradicate the gambling bug and let the rum bug play solitaire. When the rum bug gets you going you immediately set out to cul-

tivate another gambling bug. And you're never one, two, three.

"Of the different species of the gambling bug the faro clincher 'll take you about, as far as any of 'em. It got me out to Spokane about twelve years ago. I landed there with the last suit and a straw hat, and it was pretty chilly at that. I'd been trying to create a booze famine in Denver and to put all of the Denver banks out of business, and when I fell down on both jobs I turned my face toward the land of the setting sun on a tourist sleeper and pulled up in Spokane, because that was as far as my ticket read. I put the temporary squinch on the rum bug when I got there and piked along at a ten-cent table with the last two dollars I had. I ran it up to about seventy-five dollars, policed myself up and fell into a good job as boss dealer for one of the biggest limit banks in the burg. I worked along there for about three months, sloughing off, as usual, the ten dollars a night that I earned dealing, by trying to whop other banks during the afternoon, when the shoe-stringer came along who nailed me for more than half the bank's roll and got me fired.

"He was a seedy, chubby-faced duck from somewhere back this way, as I judged from his

spiel. I had noticed him standing behind the chairs of players for about a week of nights before he got into the game. The way he got in was by plunking a white chip—the whites were one dollar—on the king to win. He stood up waiting for the turn without much of a show of interest. The king won and he let it stand. It won four straight times and he let it stand each time. Then he pulled down the bunch and called the turn right. My lookout nodded him to take the seat of a busted player who got up when the box ran out, and the chubby-faced, shabby chap sat down, pulled out an inch of pencil to keep cases and started in to play faro with the pick-up he had made off one white. He knew the game and his luck was along with him. Inside of an hour he had traded his five or six tall stacks of whites for five dollar blues out of my rack and he still went on and won. He cashed in when he was about $400 to the good and went out for a while. When he returned he had three other fellows along with him, all of them just about as seedy and down-at-heel-looking as himself. He bought a twenty stack of blues for himself and stacked each of his three friends to a bunch of the same height, which took all of his $400. They all got seats, and from the moment they sat down they began to wallop

me. They were scientific men at bank and all four of them won from the jump. They never coppered each other, so that the bank did not benefit any from their differences of opinion on the turns. When they had got about $3,000 of the bank's money inside of two hours' play I looked around for the old man, intending to ask him to put in another dealer to break the bank's hoodoo. The old man wasn't around, however, and so I went on dealing. When they had taken $8,000 out of the safe—it was then along toward two o'clock in the morning—I had a chin with the lookout and we decided to turn the box on them for the night, not knowing how the old man would feel over the melting of half his roll.

"'It's all off for the night,' said I to the chubby-faced chap, addressing him as the staker of the four. 'Come around to-morrow night and pass it in again.'

"'Want to give each of us a $1,000 turn on separate cards in a fresh box for a wind-up?' he asked me. A dealer never turns down a recouping chance like that, and I nodded. I riffled the boxful, and they put markers down to indicate their respective $1,000 bets. All four of them won, which put the bank a bit over $12,000 to the bad.

"Then they cashed in. The chubby-faced

chap gave each of his three pals $2,000, and they passed out, as shabby a looking lot of geezers to have broken the spine of one of the good banks of the boom town as ever I saw.

"The old man didn't turn up that night, but when I and the lookout told him the next morning of the coal-mauling we had got the night before he looked black.

"'You're both all right,' said he, 'but you're fired. I don't ask men working for me to deal brace or phony, but I can't stand for the worst pair of Jonahs this side of the Big Divide. I pass you both up. Get what's coming to you from the money devil, and consider yourselves dished.'

"The way the old man took it made me rather hot. I told him so.

"'You're a game sport,' said I to him, 'with the copper on. I don't mind being fired particularly, but to get an unreasonable roast from a man who talks like a sure-thinger inflates my chest.'

"There was only fifty dollars or sixty dollars coming to me, and when I got hold of it the rum bug came to life and sung me an aria or two. I pulled out of Spokane that same night with two rear-pocket bottles and a ticket for Tacoma, and when I got there I found there was nothing do-

ing. I chubbed off what I had left of my Spokane earnings at a ninety-three per cent. bank, and then I went to work in a harness shop as bookkeeper for twelve dollars a week. This wore me out in less than three weeks, and I lent a listening ear again to the sonatas of the rum insect. This landed me in Seattle, and I made a couple of trips from Seattle to Alaska as purser of a boat. I had $100 when I got back from the last trip and went over to Portland. I took a few there to keep out the Oregon wet, and when I emerged from the two weeks of it I was still being rained upon, and no place to get out of it.

"One night I was walking by one of the garish ginmills of Portland, wondering if I couldn't work the reliever game and get a bum suit, with about two dollars change, for the one I had on, when a fellow walked out of the rum emporium and happened to get his lamps on me. He was more than the limit in toggery and general grooming, and the shiny ones in his necktie and on his finger hurt my eyes. I knew him as soon as I saw him, and he knew me.

"'Hello, there, Spokane,' said he, walking up to me and holding out his mitt. 'You look kind o' beaten out. When did you quit dishing 'em out in Spokane, and why?'

"He was the chubby-faced chap, no longer seedy, who had been the occasion of my losing my job as a dealer in Spokane.

"'The old man couldn't stand for your win that time,' I told him, 'and he ditched me the next morning.'

"'He did, hey?' said the chubby-cheeked duck. 'Well, I'll tell you something. That was like squealing, for he didn't know that he had any cause for dumping you. But he did. Do you remember how I started in that night?'

"'With a lonesome white chip,' said I. 'I've got blooming good cause to remember it.'

"'How d'ye suppose I got that chip?' he asked me.

"'Bummed it off some piker, I suppose,' I said to him.

"'Not any,' said he. 'I didn't know a man in Spokane, for I didn't have any front there until after I pinned you to the stick. I was just watching the game that night, like I had been doing for a week or so, when I noticed that you forgot to pick off a white chip that had been lost on the four. The lookout said something to you when the four came out, and you didn't take the chip down. I asked one of the fellows at the table to pass me that chip on the four, and he did. That's

the way I got started on the king play, and the chip that put me in business was the house's. I'm now engaged in the business, exclusively, of cracking banks with the top-price chips, and I'm making it stick, at that.'

"I told him that he looked the part.

"'And as long as you lost your job on my account,' he went on, 'it's up to me to make good. Let us first repair within and become exceedingly drunk, and to-morrow I'll stake you.'

"That lasted two weeks, but the chubby-faced chap was unbreakable. He was too much to the good. At the end of the two weeks—and two weeks in Portland can be made as warm as a similar period in any old place on the slope—he emerged with an idea.

"'It would be poetic retribution,' he said, 'if we could run down to Spokane and bat the bank of the man who fired you for losing to me. Want to try it?'

"We went down to Spokane that same night and the next night we both turned up in the bank where I had done the dealing. The old man knew me instantly, and smiled saturninely when I passed over my $100 for twenty blues. He didn't know the chubby-faced chap, though, for he hadn't been around when the latter had socked it to his bank

through me. The best I could do in three nights' play was to cash in for $1,600, but my friend with the bundle roped the old man's new dealer for four times that much before the box was turned on him by order of the old man, who had got cold feet.

"Then I went down to San Francisco and came around to New York by way of the Panama steamers. I was so derned grateful to land back here, not only with a whole skin, but with a front trimmed with cow bells all over, that I extracted the gambling and rum bugs from then on and bottled them up in alcohol, and I wasn't the alcohol bottle, either."

TALE THE TWENTY-THIRD

In Which Ex-Tank No. 22 Forgiveth Ye Isle of Manhattan, After Having Departed Therefrom in Wrath

TALE THE TWENTY-THIRD

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 22 FORGIVETH YE ISLE OF MANHATTAN, AFTER HAVING DEPARTED THEREFROM IN WRATH

"ONE time I passed New York up because the constituted authorities hereof, that I helped to elect with my vote, treated me real rude and mean," remarked Ex-Tank No. 22, flicking the ash of an expensive cigar off the lapel of his blue-and-red-dotted fancy waistcoat. "Said I to New York that time, 'You won't do; you're scratched;' and I went right away, just as mad as I could be, so I was. But, say, it was fierce, the way I got jerked around for a farmer that time. Right in the town that I was born in, too. Right in the middle of the Tender ——

"Well, anyhow, one Saturday night in the fall of '90 I was walking up Sixth avenue, with forty-eight dollars in my outdoor pajamas, and just the pristine, beauteous beginning of one of those things —I'd only had twenty-six, to the best of my remembrance, so that at every step I could just

throw back my head and hear the music—and I was going to my room, at that, with an armful of new haberdashery that I'd got down town. After four months on the Croton, I'd just taken those twenty-six on knocking off work that evening for the purpose of temporarily effacing the grey, sombre hues of the game as it was running; of blotting out, for the time being, a too powerful appreciation of the ineffable sorrow of this life as she is lived by ——"

"Wait a minute," exclaimed Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker. "Am I to understand that these meetings are going to be allowed to degenerate into exploitations of Longfellowish wooziness on the part of every hot-air pumper that ——"

"The sergeant-at-arms will place No. 7 in the chilled ante-chamber for twelve minutes for lodging a frivolous protest," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising and frowning severely. "Twenty-two will proceed."

After the parliamentarian and kicker had been dragged from the room into the cold-storage compartment, Ex-Tank No. 22 proceeded:

"Well, I decided to make it twenty-seven, and no more, and up around Thirty-second street I went in and got the twenty-seventh and pulled out

my forty-eight dollars to liquidate for the same, having no scrap metal in my change pocket. It was about nine o'clock at night, and there weren't so many bulb lights up around that way as there are now, and I hadn't any more'n got out of the door—I was keeping on my course, as if I was stepping rail fences—when I was necked. What d'ye think of that—me necked, that had been up against everything in this town from the days when Harry Hill was—well, I got mine, there and then, just as if I'd only stepped off the ferry, the first time in straight from Painted Post, or Peoria, or Peru, Ind. And I got it right. There were two of 'em, and while one of them held my lid back so that I could have seen the nails in the heels of my shoes if it had been light enough, the other one just clasped his fingers around that roll as if he knew more about where it was than I did—which he no doubt did.

"'This is too much of the batter for you to have on you all at one and the same time, Tommy,' the chap who copped my wad had the gall to say to me while the other fellow was still necking me. 'You got a list to starboard now from packing it around. And look how we need the money, too!'

"Then my head was suddenly released—this all happened in a dark doorway into which I was

yanked—and I got a hard jolt on the left ear and then another one on the right—and how long I leaned up against that doorway, making a map of the Milky Way from those two hard pushes, I don't know. It was long enough for the pair of cheerful opportunity-graspers to mingle with the madding crowd, anyhow. I stooped down, picked up the bundle of haberdashery that I had dropped, and I was getting real mad every minute. I didn't like insolvency brought about that way, which was worse than being left at the post. So I went into the booze bazaar where I had encircled that twenty-seventh and last and threw a warm, personally-conducted symposium of conversation at the low forehead behind the bar.

"'Say,' I asked him, 'are you in on these grafts, and if you are, do I get a discount for cash?'

"Then I tossed him the story of how I had got mine just outside his place by a couple of gum-shoe artists that, I maintained, were kept there by the man behind the bar for the purpose of annexing good things that came that way. The rough neck behind the bar gave me the polaric gaze.

"'Pass out de side gate, Archie, an' see how de evenin's holdin' up,' said he, placing his countenance within two and a quarter inches of mine. 'Went away w'ile it's easy f'r youse to. Youse

ain't bin rolled none aroun' dis honkatonk. Take de exit, or I'll come aroun' an' dent up yer shins.'

"But the twenty-seven that I had stowed beneath my waistband rendered it difficult for me to see it that way, and I told him some more things. The next I knew I was making some more astronomical observations from a coign of vantage in the cobbled ditch outside, and I rose up and concluded to go away from there. But I was still real passionate under the neck band about the way the game had been dished up to me, and I started for the Thirtieth street station to have a conversation with the man behind the desk about it. By this time my two ears looked like they had elephantiasis from the two clips I had got in the doorway when I was separated from my little stack of greens, and I was likewise considerably mudded up from the attentions I had received at the hands of the gent with the uninviting countenance behind the bar where I had started in to register my roar. So that when I walked into the Tenderloin station I'm willing to acknowledge that I didn't look as if I'd just stepped out of a suit case.

"The man behind the desk—I don't know who he was, but he looked real massive and unsympathetic—was writing in a big book.

"'Sir,' I started to say to him, 'I have unhap-

pily been fallen upon by thieves, who have abused me most shamefully, and —'

"Just then the massive man behind the desk looked up. He gazed at me right hard.

"'Say,' said he, after a pause, 'it's good o' you to've come in on your own hook, Zeke; saves us trouble; we'd ha' had to pick you up.'

"Then he beckoned to the doorman.

"'Go through it,' said the man behind the desk to the doorman, indicating me.

"Then I did set up the long yell for fair. Told 'em that I had come down there to make a complaint, that I had not always been thus, that they wronged me, Claudie, that I'd have the life's blood of every individual cop in the whole municipality of New York if I didn't get what was coming to me, and other things like that. Well, these little remarks that I exuded under a profound sense of wrong didn't help me any at all. They wound me up, in fact.

"'Take it back,' said the massive man behind the desk, and I was yanked back to one of those little compartments that have one real hard board running along one side.

"Say, how was that for a man that was born and raised right in this town, that had never been pinched before, to get it going and coming, both

ends from the middle, and not even all bets off and twenty minutes for a new book? Didn't I have a mad coming? Can you blame me for not thinking right then that New York was the only burg on the chart?

"But there was nothing doing. I had to stand for it. I tried to get 'em to let me send out for somebody to take me out of hock, but they told me I was a four-flushing hobo, and that was the end of that. Then I began to figure that I'd be lucky if I didn't get four months on the Island.

"Sleep there was nix for me that night. Somewhere above me there was a young lady who would alternate in singing 'There's a Little Green Spot,' with the voice of an angel—I never heard a purer, sweeter voice than that unfortunate woman's, whoever she was—and cussing like a pirate, and right next to me was a large, chesty 'longshoreman with the cobras, who had removed a considerable portion of his wife's anatomy with a cotton hook, and seemed to be quite put out because he hadn't finished her. Oh, yes, I had a real nice time in the Tenderloin that night.

"A little after sunrise, when I was beginning to sympathize with myself and to compare my unhappy lot with that of the Prisoner of Chillon, the clanking of keys came my way, and I was herded

down to the Jefferson Market court, where there were quite a lot of young gentlemen with cold grey eyes and little or no chins who were talking about their chances of being 'bound over' for Special Sessions for second-story jobs of that sort, and who calculated with great interest on the size of the 'bits' they were due to get. They gave me a chance to wash up down there, and when I got before the Magistrate he permitted me to spiel my tale. I was dead sober and pretty darned eloquent, and I handed the old gentleman such a straight bill of lading that he just nodded me loose, although I was charged with having been drunk and disorderly and resisting an officer.

"I walked out into the sunlight of that Sunday morning, sore as a stone-bruise, and with half an idea of burrowing a hole under New York and blowing it into the air. I had seventy cents left in change out of my forty-eight dollar roll, and I shot four in so quick that the speak-easy barkeep stared at me. Then I went out and walked and thought about what a nice old town New York would look like in ashes.

"I leaned against the iron fence around a church when I got tired walking, and I guess the drowsy music of the organ inside, that had just started playing, put me to sleep. Anyhow, I got shook

awake by a fine-looking chap with a plug hat and a serious face. His wife and little girl were standing some distance away. They were about to enter the church. I started down the street. After I had gone about twenty feet I heard the patter of little feet, and the little girl belonging to the man who had shook me awake was standing alongside me with the penny that she had to put in the church-box held out in her little fist.

"'Will 'oo take zis, poor man?' she said to me, and, not wanting to snub the child, I took the penny and walked on.

"Say, how was that? Enough to make a man fall in love with the situation, wasn't it? Little girls on the street taking me for such a castaway on the shores of time—me, that hadn't done a thing but push in a few hooters the night before, to efface temporarily the ineffable sorrow of life—that they felt like staking me to pennies.

"'I'm going ay-way from this,' said I, right off, then, and it was also then that I scratched New York. I had in my pocket a thousand-mile ticket on a railroad going west, and I got on a train just thirty minutes later and never got off until the steam rattler pulled into Detroit. I wanted to get right far away from New York, as I say.

"Oh, well, yes, I came back. The man with

a grievance against this town doesn't hang on to it long. The old hunch to be back in the real puddle gets you up around the neck when you're long enough in one of the imitation burgs to get to thinking, and that's what happened to me. I peddled tin and silk badges at the Fair Grounds in Detroit, trying to make enough to stake myself to a ride back to New York, but I couldn't get hold of enough of the papers to do it that way; the best I could do was to seize out enough to get woozed up in my longing to be back in this little old town, and it looked like Detroit forever and a day for me when one morning I walked down to the Windsor ferryboat and bought a bunch of tickets for some rides back and forth. I wanted to make myself think I was riding on a ferry around this neck of it. When I got over to the dinky little Canadian town of Windsor the second time, I concluded to get off and take a walk around. Then I came back to take the ferry to Detroit again. I was about a block from the Windsor ferry-house when a dark-looking chap with a foreign accent tackled me.

"'Going across?' he asked me.

"'Yep,' said I.

"'Likewise am I,' said he. 'But I should like to have you carry a bit of a package over for me,

if you don't mind. I judge you are not prospering particularly?'

"'Not enough to give me that world-weary feeling,' said I.

"Oh, I was next, all right. This guy had a little smuggling on hand, and he wanted to pass the goods to me. I was ready for it, at that. I don't say it was dead right, but I was ready for it. We went to a little second-floor room, and he handed me a small parcel, which I stuffed into my back pocket.

"'I do this, only in case they suspect me—I have had previous trouble at this point,' the chap said.

"I nodded.

"'Well,' said I, 'it's not highway robbery or arson, and I guess the Government can stand to let me have a ride back to where I belong.'

"I can't understand why the chap trusted me as he did, but I suppose he never had his lamps off me from the time we separated to go to the ferry by different routes. When I got aboard the boat I saw him, all right, on the upper deck. We held no sort of communication, as a matter of course, during the ride over to Detroit. He was, as he had anticipated, searched with particular care when he got into the hands of the customs people, while

I just slouched over the gangplank with my hands in my pockets.

"I waited for him up at the top of Woodward avenue, and then we went to another small room, where he passed me a century without any dickering. Then he opened up the little package I had toted across the stream for him. I never saw such stones.

"'They are worth about $15,000,' he told me with a slow grin. 'Are you not sorry you did not run for it?'

"'Nix, Rochambeau,' I told him, 'I may have been a contrabandist for once, but I am several geographical leagues from being a thief.'

"Which virtuous sentiment he properly applauded, and one hour and fifteen minutes later I was on the varnished car, bound hitherward, with ——"

"And have you forgiven New York?" inquired the whole club in breathless suspense.

"Yes," replied Ex-Tank No. 22.

A great sigh of relief went around the room.

"Then I guess we're safe, and can go right on in the same old way," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising, and the meeting was over.

TALE THE TWENTY-FOURTH

In Which Ex-Tank No. 27 Findeth Himself Shanghaied on Board ye Brigantine Monmouth Queen

TALE THE TWENTY-FOURTH

IN WHICH EX-TANK NO. 27 FINDETH HIMSELF SHANGHAIED ON BOARD YE BRIGANTINE MONMOUTH QUEEN

"If you want to get hunk, all you've got to do is just to wait, that's all," dryly remarked Ex-Tank No. 27, as he ate the end off a fresh Reina Victoria and produced his turquoise-encrusted match box.

Whereupon he proceeded to indulge in so prolonged a silence that the expectant Ex-Tanks present gazed upon him nervously and shifted uneasily in their chairs.

"What's that, an installment or a sample?" inquired Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker. "Has it got so in this outfit that we've got to swallow 'em serially? Say, is that going to be continued in your next, or——"

"The Tonsorial Ex-Tank will shave one side of Number Seven's countenance, and one side only, if he exudes another kick during the session," said the Chief Ex-Tank. rising, ponder-

ously. "At the same time, it would seem to be up to Number Twenty-seven to complete his parable."

"Somehow or another," went on Ex-Tank No. 27, irrelevantly and dreamily, "I could n-o-t, not, get 'em right that winter. They may have been running for Hogan, but they weren't running for me. When I'd dig a sleeper up, and get it right, and lose rest waiting for the day to go down the line on it, confidently expecting it 'ud be 30 to 1 or better, the word got out every time, by the underground, or some way or another, and the skate 'ud prance to the post with 1 to 3 on chalked in front of his name, and every piker and beanery worker in San Francisco standing to go broke on him, after they'd hammered the price down from something like even money. Nope, I couldn't get one over. Every one that I looked over and saw worked at grey dawn and salted down as the right goods the next time he went to the pump for long money had a Hanover or a Hindoo price tacked to him when the slates went up. You can't keep a thing quiet in 'Frisco, anyhow. It's everywhere in twenty minutes, and no time for a new book, at that. There are too many grafters out there for a good thing to be kept quiet, and the 'Frisco grafters, unlike the bunch back this way, pull together.

So that if one of 'em gets wise to a long one that's due to be uncorked, it's handed around to 'em all, and the duck that fixes the whole job gets 'out in the betting' for his. That's the way it was that winter, anyhow. They began to double-reef my stack the first day I blew in from this side, where I'd had the season of my life, and I hadn't been frittering with 'em for more than two months out there before it began to look to me like a case of tackling a Chink highbinder for a job on his Napa county truck ranch.

"One raw morning—for the matter of that every morning is raw in 'Frisco—when my pyramid was down to three yellow disks, two of 'em with twenty and the other with the ten stamp, I went over to the track, resolved upon garroting the first trainer I met and making him tell me the name and address of a horse that was going to win. The first trainer I met was a little sawed-off weazen-face that used to ride 'em through the snow on the outlaws back this way. He had a string of four or five fair ones, with which he frequently got the bum ends of the purses and occasionally the main money. I knew him pretty well. I didn't exactly neck him, but I told him I just couldn't see the long walk back to the Atlantic seaboard, and that if something wasn't doing

pretty soon there'd be an increase of one in the prison census of San Quentin, for I meditated sticking up the Mayor in the City Hall, or building a tunnel under the safe to the Cliff House, or something like that. He kept on chewing his straw, did this weazen-faced ex-jock, and then he said:

"'Say, d'je ever see that camel I got?'

"'Yes,' said I, 'the whole string of 'em. I wouldn't give you the sweat-band in my last year's straw hat for the bunch.'

"'I guess you ain't seen this one,' said he, still eating hay. 'He's a hump-back with four stomachs—but it's going to happen, and I guess I'll let you in for the sake of the old days at the Gut—I know you won't split it.'

"Then he took me around to his barn and showed me the thing. It looked like a cross between a dromedary and a Mexican burro. It was a California-bred mutt that had never raced. It had gone wrong as a two-year-old before being sent to the pump, and it was still waiting for a sight of the flag as a three-year-old.

"'This is it,' said the weazen-face, and I sat down on a bale of hay and howled sardonically at him.

"'To-morrow's the day,' said my friend the

ex-jock and trainer. 'First race, which is for maiden three-year-olds. There'll be about fifteen in, and this one'll be write-your-own ticket. Put what you got left down straight—no place or show. It's plum preserves, and I'm giving you a real push-up by letting you in. The camel's been saved for this, and he's a racehorse. Get out, now, I'm busy.'

"Something in the little chap's tone struck me. He was dead in earnest, and I knew that he never fooled himself. I'd known him for a good many years, and he'd always told me right when the skates he was riding or training were to the good and meant, and when they wouldn't do.

"'Camel or no camel,' says I to myself, after I had a chance to frame his talk up, 'I'll just let 'em run for the books to-day, and take some o' that with what I've got left to-morrow.'

"And I did. But the trouble was, I got woozed up some before I left for the track on the afternoon the camel was going to get his first peek at the starter. Met an army officer at the Palace that I'd known when we were kids back this way, and we shot ten or fifteen in as if all the wet emporiums were going out of business before noon. Then I had a few more on the way to the track and after I got there. But I was still to the good as far as

having a clear lid was concerned when the slates went up for the first race. I saw my friend the trainer and ex-jock leaning over the paddock fence.

"'It's right,' said he out of a corner of his mouth. 'Go as far as you like.'

"So I spins over to the first book in the line, and sees that the camel is at 40 to 1. I'd done business with that bookie often before. I passed him one of the twenty dollar chips, and, naming the camel, told him I wanted that one straight.

"'Another one of your hot things,' said the bookie, handing me the grin along with the ticket calling for $800 to $20.

"Then I had another pint, and went into the stand to watch the race. It looked to me like that camel just winked at the judges as he walked—he didn't run, he walked—under the wire, twenty lengths to the good.

"'Here's looking at Broadway six days from date,' says I, digging for my $800 to $20 ticket. The ticket wasn't there. I did the panic hunt through all my clothes. The ticket was gone. I hustled down to the betting ring, and was first in my bookie's line.

"'Say,' I said to him, 'I lost my good-thing ticket, but you remember the bet, don't you?'

"As I spoke I got a pipe at the pay-off sheet,

and my $800 to $20 bet was the only one the sheet contained on the camel.

"The bookie looked me over as if I belonged to a bunch of Malay boomerang throwers on a Midway.

"'What good-thing ticket?' said he. 'Who are you?'

"I pointed to the pay-off sheet.

"'That one,' said I, and my fingers ached at the tips of them to clutch his throat.

"'Go ay-way,' said he. 'Go right ay-way. You may be good as a trance medium, but you won't do. Go ay-way.'

"A real cute welch, wasn't it? I only got one good poke at him before I was hurtled out of the grounds.

"I had a temperature of 112 centigrade, and was bubbling inside like twin geysers, when I took up the lope from the track to 'Frisco; and when I got there I went right up in the air, lacking toe weights. I was going to lay for that bookie and pull out his finger nails and cauterize his lamps and do lots of things to him: but I still had some dollars on me, and by the time it was up to me to be at the entrance to the bookie's hotel and start in to do him rude, I was down at the foot of Clay street buying Mulligans—which consist of red peppers mixed

with steamed beer—for a large and admiring bunch of 'longshoremen. They took turns telling me the stories of their lives, and then I'd purchase more Mulligans for 'em. They'd edge up and give me lung-to-lung talks about what a nice, chile con carne proposition I was, whereupon I'd order additional beakers composed of red peppers and steamed beer for them, and the dripped green boys for myself. I remembered afterward that they had told me about a seamen's strike that was then on which caused a general tie-up of all ships that wanted to break out of the port of San Francisco. I didn't forget about the bookie's welch on my $800 to $20 ticket, but I was having so much fun studying primitive man in the shape of Mulligan-absorbing 'longshoremen that I decided I'd wait until the next day to gnaw the bookie's bones.

"Well, the blank came, as the derned old thing always does. I was getting the boots when I came to in a greasy bunk in the fo'c'sle of the brigantine Monmouth Queen, lumber-laden, for Hilo, Hawaiian Islands. The bucko first mate was wearing the boots. I'd been shanghaied. It was then that I remembered about that seamen's strike.

"Say, mine is a sad story, with tremolo music

on the G string, and I was not always thus, with the up-stage lights gradually lowered. I don't like to allude frivolously to the eighteen days I put in on the brigantine Monmouth Queen. When I was yanked aboard the Monmouth Queen I didn't know the difference between a capstan bar and a ratline—but I learned, all right: oh, yes, I learned —particularly with reference to the capstan bar. Likewise the bucko first mate gave me personally conducted lessons as to the meaning of marlin-spikes and belaying pins. He was a devilishly zealous instructor, that mate, and the way he laid himself out, and me, too, in his efforts to teach me seamanship, is something that I lay awake o'nights and think about even now. I am free to say that if I ever met up with that mate here in New York I'd blow him off to the finest meal of concentrated lye that could be bought.

"There was no use in my setting up the long moan when I came to on board the Monmouth Queen, and I didn't do it. I did what the mate told me, and I did it sudden every time, at that. My fo'c'sle shipmates were all old flat-feet, and they put me wise to the fact from the jump that if I didn't do things real quick for that mate I'd go over the side without being sewed in any hammock, and when I get a tip like that I always play

it across the board. I was as good as I could be, alow and aloft, as long as I was one of the crew of the brigantine Monmouth Queen, so that when she finally dropped her mudhook, eighteen days out, in the harbor of Hilo, which is the main town of the main island of Hawaii of the Hawaiian group, I didn't have any more than 200 or so dents on me that the bucko mate had put there in his more playful moments.

"I didn't want to ride any more on the Monmouth Queen, and when a Kanaka's bumboat came alongside the ship the evening we got in, to peddle bananas and alligator pears and cigarettes and things to the crew, I dropped into the boat under cover of the darkness while the Kanaka was doing his peddling forward. I crawled under a tarpaulin that the Kanaka had spread over his goods up in the eyes of the bumboat, and after a while he hopped in and pushed off, without dreaming that he had a passenger. When he had beached his bumboat—there are no docks in Hilo—and I rose up in the darkness, shrouded in the tarpaulin, the way that Kanaka threw himself face downward on the sand and prayed out loud to the Kanaka Goddess Pele—who is supposed to preside over the volcanic fireworks of Hawaii—was real religious and impressive.

"That night I walked the natural palm avenues, wondering what they were doing in all the flats I knew in New York, and thinking about the good things, solid and liquid, in the $7.98 refrigerators in all the flats I knew in New York, while the big stars of that latitude rubbernecked at me and threatened—they seemed so close—to come right down and hit me a few.

"About seven o'clock the next morning I was slouching by a big livery stable on the main street of Hilo, when a man who was sitting in a chair in front of the livery stable office looked up and passed me the nod.

"'Hello,' said he, 'when did you drop in?'

"I told him how I'd slipped in under the harbor guns, so to speak, the night before, informing him that I'd been shanghaied, and incidentally remarking that the next time I went to sea I'd be sitting at either the right or left hand side of the skipper, so's I could josh him during meals.

"'The motion of a ship in the part I've been riding in during the last eighteen days depletes my system,' I added.

"'Say, do you think you could drive four hosses?' the man in the chair in front of the livery stable, who was the boss, as I afterward found out, asked me.

"'I couldn't think of driving less'n eight,' I told him.

"'Know something about hosses, then?' said he.

"Did I know anything about horses! Did I know anything else but things about horses at 1 to 20 on to 200 to 1 against?

"'Because I guess I can give you a job, Bub,' says this livery stable man, 'if you think you can handle a four-hoss team.'

"Then he told me that he sent a four-horse coach filled with tourists up to the Burning Lake of Kilauea—about thirty miles up on the side of the volcano of Mauna Loa—every morning, but that his driver had embarked upon a massive saki drunk the night before, after fetching the coach down on the return trip, and wasn't liable to show up for some days.

"Two hours later I had the four lines in my mitt, and was sitting on the seat of the coach like as if it was all mine—a Kanaka boy beside me to point out the right road for me—and about twenty swell tourists inside the coach, all bound for Peter Lee's Volcano House, which stands on the brink of that lively crater that's called the burning Lake of Kilauea. I came near hopping off the seat and cutting for it when I first came in sight of that

devilish hole in the earth, with the flame and smoke and vapor rising and falling in it like a pulse, and I concluded right there and then that the brimstone spiels that were handed to me when I was a kid at Sunday-school were all right, all right, and on the level. But I pulled the coach up in front of the Volcano House, after a six-hour tug, with whip a-cracking and colors flying, and the folks inside the coach calling me Hank Monk and other old-time stage drivers' names like that—for the road from Hilo to the Burning Lake isn't any Speedway, by a lot.

"I drove 'em down and back to Hilo the next day, and those tourists all plugged so hard for me that the livery stable boss told me I could have the coach-driving job permanently at eighty dollars a month and found, if I wanted it. Well, it costs eighty dollars to come up from Honolulu to 'Frisco, first-class, per steamship, and I wouldn't have come back to 'Frisco any other way if I'd had to stay in Hilo—or on the leper island of Molokai, for that matter—for the rest of my life; and another $100, at least, from 'Frisco to New York. Oh, yes, I wanted the job.

"Voy-la! as that Ollendorf fellows says. I drove that coach from Hilo to the Burning Lake and back for two months, and I'd probably have

driven it for another two months, so's to be able to get back here looking like some ready money, anyhow—but my day for getting hunk came around.

"I was hitching up the four one morning when the bunch of tourists bound up to the Burning Lake on my wagon came laughing and chatting to the barn from the Inter-island steamer. I knew one of them as soon as I popped my lamps on him. He was the bookie who had welched on my $800 to $20 ticket on the camel. Say, he didn't have a one on that was less'n four karats. I didn't make myself known to him, and he was too busy being gallant to the five women to notice me.

"'This,' said I to myself, as I climbed onto the box and picked up the reins, 'is my last trip up.'

"I got the coach up all right as usual. My bookie man was sitting well up forward, and through the open windows beneath me I could hear him telling the man next to him how he'd had the biggest season of his experience on the block—how only about eighteen per cent. of the favorites had reached the wire first, and the remaining eighty-two per cent. had handed the dough over to the books by the hatful.

"The tourists all climbed out when I hauled the coach up in front of the Volcano House, and sep-

arated into little groups. I never took my eye off my bookie man. After about an hour, when dinner was over, and the party was waiting to descend to the sides of the crater on pony back, the bookie walked a couple of hundred yards away from the hotel to examine a spot where vapor was rising from a hole in the ground. It was a yellow sulphur pit, as hot as molten lead. He stood there, looking into it. I was right after him, and I did such a good gum-shoe stunt that he didn't know there was anybody around until I had him right by the collar. We were screened from the view of the people on the hotel porch by a bunch of scrub, half baked trees.

" He wheeled about, as pale as a spook, when I got that quick clutch on his collar. Did he know me? In a second, or less!

" ' Ombrey,' I said to him, ' it 'ud give me a sight more satisfaction to just dump you into that pit—and no one 'ud ever be the wiser—than to collect the $820. But I need the money. Dig!'

" He dug. He passed it over in eight centuries and a twenty. I slackened my grasp on his collar and slapped him on each side of his countenance with my open palm.

" I drove the coach down to Hilo the next day, resigned my job with a mutual exchange of regrets,

and two days later I was in a cabin next to the skipper's on the steamer Australia, Honolulu to San Francisco. In sixteen days from the morning I left Honolulu I was making the rounds of all the flats I knew in New York, and doing my share of re-stocking the refrigerators.

"If you want to get hunk, all you've got to do is to just wait, that's all," dryly concluded Ex-Tank No. 27 of the Harlem Club of Former Alcoholic Degenerates.

TALE THE TWENTY-FIFTH

Wherein Ex-Tank No. 19 Dwelleth Reminiscently and Feelingly Upon ye Joys of His Former Peaceful Home

TALE THE TWENTY-FIFTH

WHEREIN EX-TANK NO. 19 DWELLETH REMINISCENTLY AND FEELINGLY UPON YE JOYS OF HIS FORMER PEACEFUL HOME

"OURS was a happy, peaceful home," said Ex-Tank No. 19, in a subdued, yearning, the-days-that-are-no-more tone. "Ours was an idyllic shack. It was a wickieup over which the white-winged dove of ——"

"Say, bite it off for a minute," interrupted Ex-Tank No. 7, the parliamentarian and kicker, "until I get the orchestra to mute the strings and play a few bars of 'In a Lighthouse by the Crick,' or 'My Little Log Cabin on East Tenth Street,' or 'My Dinky Four-Room Flat Way Down in Maine,' or something like that, with trills and tremulos and sobs on the G and D strings. It's dead easy to see that this is going to be a slow-music spiel, full of moans about busted happy homes and rum-extinguished firesides, and we ought to have fitting music to give the thing the right soaky, sobby, soggy, tear-drenched effect, with a gradual lowering of the up-stage lights, and ——"

"No. 7 will be rudely removed from the room and rigged out in the punitive, skin-tight bathing suit, thus to remain in full sight of the club until the meeting is at an end," said the Chief Ex-Tank, rising and glowering at the parliamentarian and kicker. "No. 19 will resume with the wickieup over which the white-wing-ed dove, etc."

When No. 7 had been dragged to the club's chamber of torture for kickers, No. 19 proceeded:

"Ours, as I stated, was a beatific bungalow. It was a stag flat, and there were four of us. First, me; second, Jim Callemout, the telegraph operator in a pool-room; third, Bill Writemdown, the sheet-writer for one of the main tome-makers in this county; and fourth, Percival Rockandrye, the artist, who made funny pictures for the weeklies when he wasn't real tired and the wind was favorable. The Dog was cook, overseer, and time-keeper. The Dog was a Chink we picked up to run the plant for us. He'd been steward for the skippers of two men-o'-war, had done stunts as a chambermaid in ground-and-lofty palaces on Nob Hill in San Francisco, where all the will-contestors live, had built flapjacks for a mining outfit in a Nevada camp, and held down other little jobs like that. We nailed him on Doyer street, after he'd been up against a sanded fan-tan deck and dropped

the savings of a three-years' cruise in the Navy, and was therefore willing to work for four young men of exemplary habits who longed for the calm joy-aunce of a home. His name was Hi Ky-Yi, which freely translated, means the Dog. He was a triple-X, distilled-water jewel, was the Dog, and he wouldn't think anything of it when we'd all fall in in a bunch at 4:27 in the morning, pour bottles of malt on him to wake him up, and order him to cook us up everything in the refrigerator. In just twenty-six minutes from the time we chased him out of bed on these occasions he'd have the finest parade of things to eat served on the table that I ever pulled a bench up to before or since, and he'd grin while we all sat down and made faces at him and told him that he wouldn't do, and that he ought to be cooking scouse on a lumber schooner, and things like that. Oh, the Dog was the good end of that sylvan retreat of ours, all right, but we didn't know it until it was too late.

"The Dog did all the buying and the rent-paying, and handed in his shorthand notes of the cost of running the whole heap-much plant every two weeks. We'd cut that into four and dig up the sum total, wherever it happened to be. We'd each chimed in $200 to furnish the tepee, and when the Dog got it all fixed up we had a home

right and no mistake. It was so peaceful, too, as I believed I stated before. The telegrapher generally got in about three in the morning, and then ne'd take turns in playing on his mouth-organ and mandolin for a couple of hours. The sheet-writer would usually happen in a couple of hours before, with some cab-driver for whom he had conceived such a fondness that he made him tell his sad story until sun-up. The funny paper artist was on hand all the time. He never got out of bed except to get another bottle out of the cold-storage box and to light a fresh cigarette. I neglected to state that I was at that time running a flashlight-picture plant, and of course I couldn't get in until a couple or three after midnight, and when I did get in everything was all agreeable to me. I didn't care. I loved my happy home.

"Well, it was all too good to last. When I got in one morning—the graveyards had done their yawnings a couple of hours before—I found the funny paper artist sitting on the edge of his trunk, with a light in his lanterns such as was never seen on land or sea. He was not only to the bad as to his eyes, but in every other way. He was telling the Dog that carrots were growing out of the walls and ceiling so fast that he couldn't count 'em, and demanding that the Dog fill a few bushel baskets

with 'em and take 'em to market. It didn't take me long to see that he had the Brooklyn boys right, and I had to jolly him into going along with me by telling him I was going to drive down to Washington market to find out the market price on carrots, delivered wholesale. I got him into a cab and took him to an entomological ward, and that's where he drops out.

"After that we split the Dog's vouchers into three. About a month later the sheet-writer walked in one night all prinked up, and with nothing but lemon phosphates under his waistband, and announced that that night was his ante-nuptial vigil; that it was going to happen up in Troy or somewhere the next day, and that thenceforward to the end of time he intended to be a sedate and loving husband and father. That let him out.

"The pool-room telegrapher and I split the Dog's expense statements in two and did the digging for another month, without hunting for any new recruits. Then the pool-rooms were closed up for awhile, and my remaining flat-pal had to lam West for Chicago to get a job. That left me and the Dog alone in my eight-room happy home. The $800 worth of furniture reverted to me, the agreement having been when the four of us went into furnish the idyllic honkatonk that the man

that stayed the distance should yank down the whole layout, and that there should be no draw-down for any of the quitters. It was an awful responsibility to own $800 worth of flat furniture all at one and the same time. It preyed upon me so heavily that one night I forgot to go back to the flat. I forgot to go back the next night, too, and the night after that, and about a week after I'd done my first foregetful stunt I was too far away to get back conveniently. I was in Jacksonville, Ill., where I had arrived on a train. I didn't jot the number of the train down in my notebook at the time not having been very strong on mathematics at the particular time I was riding on the train.

"Why Jacksonville, Ill.? Well, say, it's a warm night, and I like to answer easy ones, anyhow. There I was in Jacksonville, at any rate, and $800 of furniture upon which I could have realized more than 800 miles away. The conductor jostled me awake in Jacksonville at nine o'clock in the morning, and informed me that my ticket only read to that point.

"'Jacksonville,' I said to him. 'Which Jacksonville, Florida or ——'

"'Jacksonville, Chicago,' said he. 'You want to do a wiggle, at that, for the train pulls out in two minutes.'

"Jacksonville, hey? I couldn't make it out. I knew that I had been in Chicago for a day or two, but I'd never heard of Jacksonville, Ill., in my life, and how or why I'd steered my caravel to that port was one that I didn't have the time to figure out on the chart. I didn't have time because when I did the dough-mobilization customary on such occasions I found after clawing every pocket that the bundle I'd started out with in New York had proved an alibi. I was just $2.85 worth, which was big money under the circumstances, at that. I went after the shave and the shine and the clean collar and cuffs, which stood me four bits, and the milk toast and coffee breakfast gouged me out of the other thirty-five cents in change, leaving me a pat deuce to the good.

"I found the Jacksonville town photographer in his plant over a livery stable. I told him about it for about twenty minutes—about the way to make 'em buy pictures, that is—before he saw it. Then I got him hypnotized, and he told me I could go ahead with the scheme and use his apparatus and draw down half of all I made.

"I shouldered his outdoor camera and a bunch of plates and went out into the highways of Jacksonville, Ill., to do business. Every time saw a nice looking kid, boy or girl, playing around the

streets, I stood the kid up against a fence or a tree and conned it into looking pretty and smiling, and took a couple of views of it. When I found four or five kids playing together, I massed 'em into a group, and tore off a couple of 5x8 views of the group. I took about forty plates back to the photographer that evening, swooped upon his dark-room, developed the plates, and found them all to be just as cute as they could be, so they were. The next day I went after more portraits of young ones, and brought back another large stack of plates. I kept at that stunt for four days, and at the finish I had about 150 nice plates of all or nearly all of the rising generation of Jacksonville, Ill. On the fifth day I made proofs of the plates and took 'em around to the mothers of the young ones. They ate 'em up, and ordered pictures by the two dozen. My yank-down was eighty dollars, which I collected from the photographer, who almost wept when I told him that Jacksonville wasn't big enough for me, and that, having done my little win-out stunt, I was off and away. He offered me the use of his horse and buggy and a key to the cider cellar and any other old thing reasonable if I'd only stay along awhile and boom his business, but I couldn't see Jacksonville, Ill., any longer. I went to Springfield, Ill., took an

8x10 view of the house in which Abraham Lincoln lived while a resident of Springfield, drilled off about 3,000 prints from the view, advertised for agents in St. Louis and other towns where the black man and brother abides in large quantities and my agents sold the black population the photographs of the Springfield residence of Lincoln as 'the house in which the Great Emancipator wrote the Emancipation Proclamation.' The agents got one dollar a throw for the pictures, and six weeks from the day that I struck Springfield I was $1,000 to the good, and hungry for a sight of the old town.

"I got into New York at midnight, with nothing but money all over me, and I went uptown in the 'L' right away to see how my flat was making out. On my way up I figured that I'd assemble another bunch of Indians and start the happy home all over again. I touched the button and got the click, and then I felt that the Dog was a faithful old canine to be still in possession. I couldn't figure how he'd paid the rent and kept the plant going, but when the click opened the downstairs door I felt that it was all right.

"The Dog stood outside the door of my flat when I got up the stairs. When he saw me I thought his jaw was going to fall on the landing

and break. The Dog was a startled Chink, all right.

"'Hello, Ki-Yi,' I said to him. 'I'm home early, ain't I? Got anything to eat?'

"The Dog could only gasp. His manner put me next to the fact that there was something doing—besides which, I couldn't help but smell the hop. I pushed the door open—and it was all off. There were only twenty-six people lying around on bunks in my flat and hitting the pipe, that's all—only twenty-six. The Dog had started in my flat one of the most prosperous yen-hok layouts this side of San Francisco. Besides the Dog himself there were four other Chinks to cook the pills. This is the way I found my happy home.

"I took the Dog out to the kitchen and gave him the gaze. He told me that he hadn't expected me back, and that he had been tempted to do a little business on his own hook. He had paid the rent, telling the landlord that I was away on an extended vacation, had assembled his layout and gathered his clientêle, and he sure was in a big way of business when I butted in. He told me all this calmly and grinningly, and I couldn't help but feel then and there that if I'd been born with that Celestial's nerve I'd never have to live anywhere else except on a white yacht, a-cruising the Ægean sea.

"I told the Dog to get 'em out, and he did. He went from bunk to bunk and handed out the word that he'd been tipped off that there was to be a raid, and the bunch of hop-smokers got up, one by one, and crawled away. Then the Dog chased his four pill-cooks, opened the windows, fixed me up a nice little feed of fried chicken and rice, showed me the $800 he'd hauled down so far with the joint, and told me that for the time being he was too strong to work. The next morning the Dog gathered up his layout, made me his smiling devoirs, and that's where he drops out.

"I put the $800 worth of furniture in storage, and after a couple of months I forgot to pay the storage.

"All this happened six years ago.

"Last week I was walking through Madison Square, wondering why the hoboes sitting on the benches wouldn't abjure the Demon Rum once and forever—like all of us here present did when the gaff got too strong and we had to—when I got a clip on the back that sent me forward about twelve feet. I wheeled around. There was the ex-inmate of my happy home, the funny paper artist, upon whom I hadn't clapped a lamp since that time I'd taken him to the bug-ward when he saw the carrots growing out of the walls and ceilings

of our eight-room Arcadia. He looked all to the good, fat, sassy and dressed-up—he's a candidate for election to membership in this club at the next quarterly meeting—and after we'd talked it over for an hour or so he dragged me over to Bayonne, N. J., to have dinner at his plant. I walked into his derned nice little home, was introduced to his pretty, tidy little wife, saw a couple o' fat young ones playing around—and then that queer feeling that I'd seen it all before crept over me. I rubbed my lamps and looked again. The funny paper artist stood a little away from me, grinning.

"'Looks kind o' familiar to you, eh?' said he.

"I couldn't get my eyes away from that furniture. It seemed as if I knew every stick of it.

"'It's the same old gear,' said he. 'I bought it at auction when I was married three years ago, when the storage establishment sold it to pay overdue storage charges.'

"I stayed all night, and slept in the same brass-and-white bed in which I'd reposed in my own happy home six years before."

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